

ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΕΚΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ.

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
LIBERTY
OF
PROPHESYING.

SHEWING

The Unreasonableness of Prescribing
to other Mens FAITH, and the Iniquity
of Persecuting Differing OPINIONS.

By JER. TAYLOR, Chaplain in Ordinary
to King CHARLES the First, and some-
time Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.

The Third Edition, Corrected.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the Assigns of *Luke Meredith*; and are to
be Sold by *James Holland* at the Bible and Ball
at the *West End* of St. Paul's, 1709. //



R

to
w
ho
in
w
a
ag
un
ne

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHRISTOPHER
Lord HATTON,

Baron HATTON of Kirby; Comptroller of His Majesty's Household, and one of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

MY LORD,

IN this great Storm which hath dash't the Vessel of the Church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the Coasts of *Wales*, and in a little Boat thought to have enjoyed that rest, and quietness, which in *England* in a greater I could not hope for: Here I cast Anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the Storm followed me with so impetuous violence, that it broke a Cable, and I lost my Anchor: And here again I was exposed to the mercy of the Sea, and the gentleness of an Element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And

A 2

but

but he who stilleth the raging of the Sea, and the noise of his Waves, and the madness of his people, had provided a Plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my Friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble Enemy: *Οἱ γὰρ βάρβαροι παρείχον εἰς τὴν τυχεῖσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῶν, ἀνάψαντες γὰρ πυρὸν ποροσελάσσοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸ εἶδόν τ' ἐρεσώτα καὶ διὰ τὸ ψύχου.* And now since I have come ashore, I have been gathering a few sticks to warm me, a few Books to entertain my thoughts, and divert them from the perpetual Meditation of my private Troubles, and the publick Dyscrasy, but those which I could obtain were so few and so impertinent, and unuseful to any great purpose, that I began to be sad upon a new stock, and full of apprehension that I should live unprofitably, and die obscurely, and be forgotten, and my bones thrown into some common charnel house, without any name or note to distinguish me from those who only served their Generation by filling the number of Citizens, and who could pretend to no thanks or reward from the Publick beyond a *trium liberorum*. While I was troubled with these thoughts, and busie to find out an opportunity of doing some good in my small proportion, still the cares of the publick did

so intervene, that it was as impossible to separate my design from relating to the present, as to exempt my self from the participation of the common calamity; still half my thoughts were (in despite of all my diversions and arts of avocation) fixt upon and mingled with the present concernments: so that besides them I could not go. Now because the great Question is concerning Religion, and in that also my Scene lies, I resolved here to fix my considerations, especially when I observed the ways of promoting the several opinions which now are busie, to be such, as besides that they were most troublesome to me, and such as I could by no means be friends withal, they were also such as to my understanding, did the most apparently deserve their ends whose design in advancing their own opinions was pretended for Religion: For as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of Christian Religion: And however that there are some exterminating spirits who think God to delight in humane sacrifices, as if that Oracle — *Καὶ κεφαλὰς ἄδῃ καὶ τῷ πάλει πέμπει ρῶτα*, had come from the Father of Spirits, yet if they were capable of cool and tame Homilies, or would hear men of other opinions give a quiet account without invincible resolutions never to alter their persuasions, I am very much persuaded it

would not be very hard to dispute such men into mercies and compliances, and Tolerations mutual, such I say, who are zealous for Jesus Christ; than whose Doctrine never was any thing more merciful and humane, whose lessons were softer than Nard, or the juice of the Candian Olive: upon the first apprehension, I design'd a Discourse to this purpose, with as much greediness as if I had thought it possible with my Arguments to have persuaded the rough and hard handed Souldiers to have disbanded presently: For I had often thought of the Prophecy that in the Gospel, *our Swords shall be turned into plowshares, and our Spears into pruning hooks*; I knew that no tittle spoken by Gods Spirit could return unperform'd and ineffectual, and I was certain, that such was the excellency of Christ's Doctrine, that if men would obey it, Christians should never war one against another; in the mean time I considered not, that it was *prædictio concilij, non eventus*, till I saw what men were now doing, and ever had done since the heats and primitive servours did cool, and the love of interests swell'd higher than the love of Christianity; but then on the other side, I began to fear that whatever I could say would be as ineffectual, as it could be reasonable: For if those excellent words which our Blessed Master spake, could not charm the tumult of our Spirits, I had little reason to hope that one
of

of the meanest and most ignorant of his servants could advance the end of that which he calls his great, and his old, and his new Commandment, so well as the excellency of his own Spirit and discourses could. And yet since he who knew every event of things, and the success and efficacy of every Doctrine; and that very much of it to most men, and all of it to some men would be ineffectual, yet was pleased to consign our duty that it might be a direction to them that would, and a conviction and a Testimony against them that would not obey, I thought it might not misbecome my duty and endeavours to plead for peace and charity, and forgiveness and permissions mutual, although I had reason to believe that such is the iniquity of men, and they so indisposed to receive such impresses, that I had as good plow the Sands, or till the Air, as persuade such Doctrines, which destroy mens interests, and serve no end but the great end of a happy eternity, and what is in order to it. But because the events of things are in Gods disposition, and I knew them not, and because if I had known my good purposes would be totally ineffectual as to others, yet my own designation and purposes would be of advantage to my self, who might from Gods mercy expect the retribution which he is pleased to promise to all pious intentions; I resolved to encounter with all Objections,

jections, and to do something to which I should be determined by the consideration of the present distemperatures and necessities, by my own thoughts, by the Questions and Scruples, the Sects and Names, the Interests and Animosities which at this day, and for some years past, have exercised and disquieted Christendom.

Thus far I discours'd my self into employment, and having come thus far, I knew not how to get farther, for I had heard of a great experience, how difficult it was to make Brick without Straw, and here I had even seen my design blasted in the bud, and I despaired in the Calends of doing what I purposed in the Ides before: For I had no Books of my own here, nor any in the vicinage, and but that I remembered the result of some of those excellent Discourses, I had heard your Lordship make when I was so happy as in private to gather up what your temperance and modesty, forbids to be publick, I had come *in prælia inermis*, and like enough might have far'd accordingly. I had this only advantage besides; that I have chosen a Subject, in which if my own reason does not abuse me, I needed no other books or aids, than what a man carries with him on horse-back, I mean the common principles of Christianity, and those ἀξιώματα which men use in the transactions of the ordinary occurrences

of civil society; and upon the strength of them and some other collateral assistances I have run through it *utcunque*, and the sum of the following Discourses, is nothing but the sense of these words of Scripture; 1 Cor. 13.

That since *we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glass darkly*, we should not *despise or contemn* persons not so knowing as our selves, but *him that is weak in the faith we should receive, but not to doubtful disputations*; Therefore certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to those which are the idle effects of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep close to the *foundation*, which is *Faith and Obedience*, let them *build upon this foundation matter more or less precious*, yet if the foundation be intire, they *shall be saved with or without loss*. And since we profess our selves servants of so meek a Master, and Disciples of so charitable an Institute, *Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love*; for this is the best endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, when it is fast tyed in the bond of peace. And although it be a duty of Christianity, that we all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, yet this unity is to be estimated according to

Rom. 14.

Ephes. 4.
2, 3.

1 Cor. 1.
10.

Rom. 14.

to the unity of faith, in things necessary, in matters of Creed and Articles fundamental; for as for other things it is more to be wished than to be hoped for; there are some *doubtful Disputations*, and in such *the Scribe, the Wise, the Disputer of this world*, are most commonly very far from certainty, and many times from truth: There are diversity of persuasions in matters adiaphorous, *as meats and drinks, and holy days, &c.* and both parties, the affirmative and the negative affirm and deny with innocence enough, for *the observer and he that observes not*, intend both to God; and God is our common Master, we all fellow servants, and *not the judge of each other*, in matters of conscience or *doubtful Disputation*: And every man that *hath faith must have it to himself before God*, but no man must either in such matters *judge his brother or set him at nought*; but *let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another*: And the way to do that is

1 Cor. 8. 1. not by knowledge, but by charity, for *knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*; and

Verf. 7. since there is not in every man *the same knowledge*, but *the conscience of some are weak*; as

1 Cor. 10. 29. *my liberty must not be judged of another mans weak conscience*. So must not I please my self so much in my right opinion, but I must also take order that his *weak conscience be not*

Ibid.

offended or despised, for no man must seek his

own

own but every man anothers wealth: And although we must contend earnestly for the faith, yet above all things we must put on charity which is the bond of perfectness: And therefore this contention must be with arms fit for the Christian warfare, the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of Faith, and preparation of the Gospel of peace, instead of shoes, and a helmet of salvation, but not with other arms, for a Church man must not be *πληκτικός*, a striker, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and the persons that use them ought to be gentle, and easy to be intreated, and we must give an account of our Faith to them that ask us with meekness and humility, for so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. These and thousands more to the same purpose are the Doctrines of Christianity, whose sense and intendment I have prosecuted in the following Discourse, being very much displeased that so many opinions and new doctrines are commenc'd among us, but more troubled that every man that hath an opinion thinks his own and other mens salvation is concern'd in its maintenance, but most of all that men should be persecuted and afflicted for disagreeing in such opinions which they cannot with sufficient grounds obtrude upon others necessarily, because they cannot propound them infallibly, and because they have

Colos. 3.
14.

have no warrant from Scripture so to do: For if I shall tye other men to believe my opinion, because I think I have a place of Scripture, which seems to warrant it to my understanding, why may he not serve up another dish to me in the same dress, and exact the same task of me to believe the contradiction: And then since all the Hereticks in the world have offered to prove their Articles by the same means by which true believers propound theirs, it is necessary that some separation either of Doctrine or of persons be clearly made, that all pretences may not be admitted, nor any just Allegations be rejected; and yet that in some other Questions whether they be truly or falsely pretended if not evidently or demonstratively, there may be considerations had to the persons of men and to the Laws of charity more than to the triumphing in any opinion or doctrine not simply necessary, Now because some doctrines are clearly not necessary, and some are absolutely necessary, why may not the first separation be made upon this difference, and Articles necessary be only urg'd as necessary and the rest left to men indifferently, as they were by the Scripture indeterminately. And it were well if men would as much consider themselves as the Doctrines, and think that they may as well be deceiv'd by their own weakness, as persuaded by the

Argu-

Arguments of a Doctrine which other men, as wise, call inevident. For it is a hard case that we shall think all Papists and Anabaptists and Sacramentaries to be fools and wicked persons, certainly among all these Sects there are very many wise men and good men, as well as erring; and although some zeals are so hot, and their eyes so inflamed with their ardors, that they do not think their Adversaries look like other men, yet certainly we find by the results of their discourses, and the transactions of their affairs of civil society, that they are men that speak and make syllogisms, and use reason, and read Scripture, and although they do no more understand all of it, than we do, yet they endeavour to understand as much as concerns them, even all that they can, even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And therefore methinks this also should be another consideration distinguishing the persons, for if the persons be Christians in their lives, and Christians in their profession, if they acknowledge the Eternal Son of God for their Master and their Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions, why then should I hate such persons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Christ, and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ,

Christ, and Christ in them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same Masters, they have not met with the same books, nor the same company, or have not the same interest, or are not so wise, or else are wiser, (that is, for some reason or other which I neither do understand, nor ought to blame) have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their School Questions to the sense of my Sect or Interest.

But now I know before-hand, that those men who will endure none but their own Sect, will make all manner of attempts against these purposes of charity and compliance, and say I, or do I what I can, will tell all their Profelytes that I preach indifferency of Religion, that I say it is no matter how we believe, nor what they profess: But that they may comply with all Sects, and do violence to their own consciences, that they may be sav'd in all Religions, and so make way for a *colluvies* of Heresies, and by consequence destroy all Religion. Nay, they will say worse than all this, and but that I am not used to their phrases and forms of declamation, I am persuaded I might represent fine Tragedies before hand. And this will be such an objection, that although I am most confident I shall make apparent to be as false and scandalous as the Objecters,

Objecters themselves are zealous and impatient, yet besides that, I believe the Objection will come where my answers will not come, or not be understood; I am also confident that in defiance and incuriousness of all that I shall say, some men will persist pertinaciously in the accusation, and deny my conclusion in despite of me: Well, but however I will try.

And first I answer, that whatsoever is against the foundation of Faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to humane society, and the publick and just interests of bodies politick, is out of the limits of my Question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration: So that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those Religions whose principles destroy Government, nor to those Religions (if there be any such) that teach ill life, nor do I think that any thing will now excuse from belief of a fundamental Article, except stupidity or sottishness and natural inhability. This alone is sufficient answer to this vanity, but I have much more to say.

Secondly, The intendment of my Discourse is, that permissions should be in Questions speculative, indeterminable, curious, and unnecessary, and that men would not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many. The fault I find

find and seek to remedy is, that men are so dogmatical and resolute in their opinions, and impatient of others disagreeings in those things wherein is no sufficient means of union and determination, but that men should let opinions and problems keep their own forms, and not be obtruded as axioms, nor questions in the vast collection of the system of Divinity, be adopted into the family of Faith: And I think I have reason to desire this.

Thirdly, It is hard to say, that he who would not have men put to death, or punished corporally for such things, for which no humane Authority is sufficient either for cognisance or determination, or competent for infliction, that he persuades to an indifferency, when he refers to another Judicatory, which is competent, sufficient, infallible, just, and highly severe. No man or company of men can judge or punish our thoughts, or secret purposes whilst they so remain, and yet it will be unequal to say, that he who owns this Doctrine preaches it lawful to men to think or purpose what they will. And so it is in matters of doubtful disputation (such as are the distinguishing Articles of most of the Sects of Christendom:) So it is in matters intellectual (which are not cognoscible by a secular power) in matters spiritual (which are to be discerned by spiritual Authority, which cannot make corpora

corporal inflictions) and in Questions indeterminate, which are doubtfully propounded or obscurely, and therefore may be *in utramque partem* disputed or believed; for God alone must be Judge of these matters, who alone is Master of our souls, and hath a dominion over humane understanding, and he that says this, does not say that indifferency is persuaded, because God alone is Judge of erring persons.

Fourthly, No part of this Discourse teaches or encourages variety of Sects, and contradiction in opinions, but supposes them already in being, and therefore since there are, and ever were, and ever will be variety of opinions, because there is variety of humane understandings, and uncertainty in things, no man should be too forward in determining all Questions, nor so forward in prescribing to others, nor invade that liberty which God hath left to us intire, by propounding many things obscurely, and by exempting our souls and understandings from all power externally compulsory: So that the restraint is laid upon mens tyranny, but no license given to mens opinion, they are not considered in any of the Conclusions, but in the premises only as an Argument to exhort to charity. So that if I persuade a license of discrediting any thing which God hath commanded us to believe,

a

and

and allow a liberty where God hath not allowed it, let it be shewn, and let the Objection press as hard as it can; but to say that men are too forward in condemning where God hath declared no sentence nor prescribed any rule; is to dissuade from tyranny, not to encourage licentiousness; is to take away a license of judging, not to give a license of dogmatizing what every one please, or as may best serve his turn. And for the other part of the Objection,

Fifthly, This Discourse is so far from giving leave to men to profess any thing though they believe the contrary, that it takes order that no man shall be put to it, for I earnestly contend that another mans opinion shall be no rule to mine, and that my opinion shall be no snare and prejudice to my self, that men use one another so charitably and so gently, that no error or violence tempt men to hypocrisy, this very thing being one of the Arguments I use to persuade permissions, lest compulsion introduce hypocrisy, and make sincerity troublesome and unsafe.

Sixthly, If men would not call all opinions by the name of Religion and Superstructures by the name of fundamental Articles, and all fancies by the glorious appellation of Faith, this objection would have no pretence or footing, so that it is the disease of the Men, not any cause that is ministered

stred by such precepts of charity that makes them perpetually clamorous: And it would be hard to say that such Physicians are incurious of their Patients, and neglectful of their health, who speak against the unreasonableness of such Empericks that would cut off a mans head if they see but a Wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man; the case is altogether the same, and we may as well decree a Wart to be mortal as a various opinion in *re aliqui non necessariâ*, to be capital and damnable.

For I consider, that there are but few Doctrines of Christianity, that were ordered to be preached to all the world, to every single person, and made a necessary Article of his explicate belief: Other Doctrines which are all of them not simply necessary, are either such as are not clearly revealed, or such as are: If they be clearly revealed, and that I know so too, or may, but for my own fault, I am not to be excused, but for this I am to be left to Gods judgment, unless my fault be externally such as to be cognoscible and punishable in humane judicatory: But then, if it be not so revealed but that wise men and good men differ in their opinions, it is a clear case, it is not *inter dogmata necessaria simpliciter*, and then it is certain I may therefore safely

disbelieve it, because I may be safely ignorant of it: For if I may with innocence be ignorant, then to know it or believe it, is not simply obligatory; ignorance is absolutely inconsistent with such an obligation, because it is destructive and a plain negative to its performance, and if I do my honest endeavour to understand it, and yet do not attain it, it is certain that is not obligatory to me so much as by accident, for no obligation can press the person of a man if it be impossible, no man is bound to do more than his best, no man is bound to have an excellent understanding, or to be infallible, or to be wiser than he can, for these are things that are not in his choice, and therefore not a matter of a Law, nor subject to reward and punishment; so that where ignorance of the Article is not a sin, there disbelieving it in the right sense, or believing it in the wrong, is no breach of any duty, essentially or accidentally necessary, neither in the thing it self, nor to the person; that is he is neither bound to the Article, nor to any endeavours or antecedent acts of volition and choice, and that man who may safely be ignorant of the proposition, is not tyed at all to search it out, and if not at all to search it, then certainly not to find it: All the obligation we are capable of, is not to be malicious or voluntarily criminal in any kind, and then if by
accident

accident we find out a truth, we are obliged to believe it; and so will every wise or good man do; indeed he cannot do otherwise: But if he disbelieves an Article without malice, or design, or involuntarily, or unknowingly, it is contradiction to say it is a sin to him who might totally have been ignorant of it; for that he believes it in the wrong sense, it is his ignorance, and it is impossible that where he hath heartily endeavoured to find out a truth, that this endeavour should make him guilty of a sin, which would never have been laid to his charge, if he had taken no pains at all: His ignorance in this case is not a fault at all; possibly it might, if there had been no endeavour to have cur'd it.

So that there is wholly a mistake in this proposition: For true it is, there are some propositions, which if a man never hear of, they will not be required of him; and they who cannot read might safely be ignorant, that *Melchizedeck* was King of *Salem*; but he who reads it in the Scripture, may not safely contradict it, although before that knowledge did arrive to him, he might safely have been ignorant of it: But this although it be true, is not pertinent to our Question; For *in sensu diviso* this is true, that which at one time a man may be ignorant of, at some other time he may not disbelieve: But *in sensu conjuncto* it is false;

For at what time, and in what circumstance soever it is no sin to be ignorant, at that time and in that conjuncture, it is no sin to disbelieve; and such is the nature of all Questions disputable, which are therefore not required of us to be believed in any one particular sense, because the nature of the thing is such as not to be necessary to be known at all simply and absolutely, and such is the ambiguity and cloud of its face and representment as not to be necessary so much as by accident, and therefore not to the particular sense of any one person.

And yet such is the iniquity of men, that they suck in opinions as wild Asses do the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted air, and then live upon it at a venture, and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and mistake, yet therefore because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction.

But besides that against this I have laid prejudice enough from the dictates of holy Scripture, it is observable that this with its appendant degrees, I mean restraint of Prophesying, imposing upon other mens understanding, being masters of their consciences, and lording it over their Faith, came in with the retinue and train of Antichrist, that is, they came as other abuses and corruptions of the Church did, by reason of the iniquity of times, and the cooling of
the

the first heats of Christianity, and the encrease of interest, and the abatements of Christian simplicity, when the Churches fortune grew better, and her Sons grew worse, and some of her Fathers worst of all; For in the first three hundred years there was no sign of persecuting any man for his opinion, though at that time there were very horrid opinions commenced, and such which were exemplary and parallel enough to determine this Question; for they then were assaulted by new Sects which destroyed the common principles of nature, of Christianity, of innocence and publick society; and they who used all the means Christian and Spiritual for their ~~dis~~improvement and conviction, thought not of using corporal force, otherwise than by blaming such proceedings: And therefore I do not only urge their not doing it as an Argument of the unlawfulness of such proceeding, but their defying it and speaking against such practices, as unreasonable and destructive of Christianity: For so *Ter-* Ad Scapu-
tullian is exprefs, *Humani juris & naturalis* lam.
potestatis, unicuique quod putaverit colere, sed
nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ suscipi
debet sponte non vi: The same is the Do-
ctrine of St. Cyprian, *Lactantius*, St. *Hila-*
ry, *Minutius Felix*, *Sulpicius Severus*, St.
Chrysostom, St. *Hierom*, St. *Austin*, *Dama-*
scen, *Theophylact*, *Socrates*, *Scholasticus*, and

St. Bernard, as they are severally referr'd to and urg'd upon occasion in the following Discourse.

To which I add, that all wise Princes till they were overborn with faction or solicited by peevish persons, gave Toleration to differing Sects, whose opinions did not disturb the publick interest: But at first, there were some heretical persons that were also impatient of an Adversary, and they were the men who at first entreated the Emperours to persecute the Catholicks; but till four hundred years after Christ, no Catholick persons, or very few, did provoke the secular arm, or implore its aid against the Hereticks, save only that *Arrius* behav'd himself so seditiously and tumultuously, that the *Nicene* Fathers procur'd a temporary Decree for his relegation, but it was soon taken off and God left to be his Judge, who indeed did it to some purpose, when he was trusted with it and the matter wholly left to him.

But as the Ages grew worse, so men grew more cruel and unchristian: And in the Greek Church *Atticus*, and *Nestorius* of *Constantinople*, *Theodosius* of *Synada*, and some few others who had forgotten the mercies of their great Master, and their own duty grew implacable and furious and impatient of contradiction. It was a bold and an arrogant speech which *Nestorius* made in his

Sermon

Sermon before *Theodosius* the younger, *Da mihi, O Imperator, terram ab hæreticis repurgatam, & ego tibi vicissim cælum dabo: Disperde mecum hæreticos, & ego tecum disperdam Persas*: It was as groundless and unwarrantable, as it was bloody and inhumane.

And we see the contrary events prove truer, than this groundless and unlearned promise; for *Theodosius* and *Valentinian* were prosperous Princes, and have to all Ages a precious memory, and the reputation of a great piety; but they were so far from doing what *Nestorius* had suggested, that they restrained him from his violence and immaturity, and *Theodosius* did highly commend the good Bishop *Proclus* for his sweetness of deportment towards erring persons, far above the cruelty of his Predecessor *Atticus*: And the experience which Christendom hath had in this last Age is argument enough, that Toleration of differing opinions is so far from disturbing the publick peace, or destroying the interest of Princes and Common-Wealths, that it does advantage to the publick, it secures peace, because there is not so much as the pretence of Religion left to such persons to contend for it, being already indulged to them. When *France* fought against the *Hugonots*, the spilling of her own Blood was argument enough of the imprudence of that way of promoting Religion; but since she hath given permission

to

to them, the World is witness how prosperous she hath been ever since: But the great instance is in the differing temper, Government and success which *Margaret of Parma*, and the Duke of *Alva* had: The clemency of the first had almost extinguish'd the flame; but when she was removed, *D'Alva* succeeded and managed the matter of Religion with Fire and Sword; he made the flame so great, that his Religion and his Prince too hath both been almost quite turned out of the Country. *Pelli è medio Sapientiam, quoties vi res agitur*, said *Ennius*; and therefore the best of men, and the most glorious of Princes were always ready to give Toleration, but never to make executions for matters disputable: *Eusebius* in his second Book of the life of *Constantine* reports these words of the Emperour, *Parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant: Ipsa siquidem communicationis & societatis restitutio ad rectam etiam veritatis viam perducere potest. Nemo cuiquam molestus sit, quisque quod animo destinat hoc etiam faciat.*

And indeed there is great reason for Princes to give Toleration to disagreeing persons, whose opinions by fair means cannot be altered; for if the persons be confident, they will serve God according to their persuasions; and if they be publicly prohibited they will privately convene, and then

all

all those inconveniences and mischiefs which are arguments against the permission of Conventicles, are Arguments for the publick permissions of differing Religions, because the denying of the publick worship will certainly produce private Conventicles, against which all wise Princes and Common-wealths have upon great reasons made Edicts and severe Sanctions, *Quicquid enim agitur absente rege, in caput ejus plerunque redundat*, say the Politicks: For the face of a Man is as the face of a Lion, and scatters all base machinations which breath not but in the dark: It is a proverbial saying, *quod nimia familiaritas servorum est conspiratio adversus Dominum*, and they who for their security run into grots and cellars, and retirements, think that they being upon the defensive, those Princes and those Laws that drive them to it are their Enemies, and therefore they cannot be secure, unless the power of the one, and the obligation of the other be lessened and rescinded; and then the being restrained and made miserable, endears the discontented persons mutually, and makes more hearty and dangerous Confederations. King James of blessed memory, in his Letters to the States of the United Provinces, dated 6 March 1613. Thus wrote *Magis autem re fore si sopiantur autoritate publicâ, ita prohibeatis Ministros vestros ne eas disputationes*

tiones in suggestum aut ad plebem ferant, ac districtè imperetis ut pacem colant se invicem Tolerando in istà opinionum ac sententiarum discrepantiâ: Eoque justius videmur vobis hoc ipsum suadere debere quod neutram comperimus adeò deviam ut non possint & cum fidei Christianæ veritate, & cum animarum salute consistere, &c. The like Council in the divisions of Germany, at the first Reformation was thought reasonable by the Emperour *Ferdinand*, and his excellent Son *Maximilian*; For they had observed that violence did exasperate, was unblest, unsuccessful and unreasonable, and therefore they made Decrees of Toleration, and appointed tempers and expedients to be drawn up by discreet persons, and *George Cassander* was design'd to this great work, and did something towards it: And *Emanuel Philibert*, D. of *Savoy* repenting of his war undertaken for Religion against the *Pedemontans*, promised them Toleration, and was as good as his word: As much is done by the Nobility of *Polonia*. So that the best Princes and the best Bishops gave Toleration and Impunities; but it is known that the first Persecutions of disagreeing persons were by the *Arrians*, by the *Circumcellians* and *Donatists*, and from them, they of the Church took examples, who in small numbers did sometime persuade it, sometime practise it. And among the Greeks it became a publick and

autho-

authoriz'd practice, till the Question of Images, grew hot and high; for then the Worshipers Images having taken their example from the Empress *Irene*, who put her Son's Eyes out for making an Edict against Images, began to be as cruel as they were deceived, especially being encouraged by the Popes of *Rome*, who then blew the coals to some purpose.

And that I may upon this occasion give account of this affair in the Church of *Rome*, it is remarkable that till the time of *Justinian* the Emperour, *A. D.* 525. the Catholicks and *Novatians* had Churches indifferently permitted even in *Rome* it self, but the Bishops of *Rome* whose interest was much concerned in it, spoke much against it, and laboured the eradication of the *Novatians*, and at last when they got power into their hands they served them accordingly, but it is observed by *Socrates* that when the first Persecution was made against them at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent* I. at the same instant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became Lords of all, it being just in God to bring a persecution upon them for true belief, who with an incompetent Authority and insufficient grounds do persecute an error less material, in persons agreeing with them in the profession of the same common faith. And I have heard it observ'd as a blessing upon St. *Austin* (who was so merciful to erring persons as the great-

greatest part of his life in all senses, even when he had twice chang'd his mind, yet to tolerate them, and never to endure them should be given over to the secular power to be kil'd) that the very night the *Van* *dals* set down before his City of *Hippo* besiege it, he dyed and went to God, being (as a reward of his merciful Doctrine) taken from the miseries to come, and yet that very thing was also a particular issue of the Divine Providence upon that City, who not long before had altered their profession into truth by force, and now were falling into their power, who afterward by a greater force turned them to be *Arrians*.

But in the Church of *Rome*, the Popes were the first Preachers of force and violence in matters of opinion, and that zealously, that Pope *Vigilius* suffered himself to be imprisoned and handled roughly by the Emperour *Justinian*, rather than he would consent to the restitution and peace of certain disagreeing persons, but as yet came not so far as death. The first that preached that Doctrine was *Dominick*, the Founder of the Begging Orders of Friars, the Friars Preachers; in memory of which the Inquisition is intrusted only to the Friars of his Order; and if there be any force in dreams, or truth in Legends (as there is not much in either) this very thing might be signified by his Mothers dream, who the

night

night before *Dominick* was born, dream'd
 she was brought to bed of a huge Dog with
 a fire-brand in his mouth: Sure enough,
 however his disciples expounded the dream,
 it was a better sign that he should prove a
 rabid, furious Incendiary, than any thing
 else; whatever he might be in the other
 parts of his life, in this Doctrine he was not
 much better, as appears in his deportment
 towards the *Albigenses*, against whom he so
 preached, *adeo quidem ut centum hæreticorum*
millia ab octo millibus Catholicorum fusa & in-
terfecta fuisse perhibeantur, saith one of him;
 and of those who were taken, 180 were
 burnt to death, because they would not ab-
 jure their Doctrine: This was the first exam-
 ple of putting erring persons to death, that
 we find in the Roman Church; For about 170
 years before *Berengarius* fell into opinion con-
 cerning the blessed Sacrament which they
 call'd Heresy, and recanted, and relapsed, and
 recanted again, and fell again two or three
 times, saith *Gerson* writing against *Romant* of
 the *Rose*, and yet he died *siccâ morte* his own
 natural death, and with hope of Heaven, and
 yet *Hildebrand* was once his judge, which
 shews that at that time *Rome* was not come to
 so great heighths of bloodshed. In *England*,
 though the Pope had as great power here
 as anywhere, yet there were no Executions
 for matter of opinion known till the time of
Henry the Fourth, who (because he Usurp'd
 the

B. Bruno
 Berengari-
 anos è suâ
 diocesi ex-
 pulit, non
 morti aut
 suppliciiis
 corporali-
 bus tradi-
 dit.

the Crown) was willing by all means to endear the Clergy by destroying their Enemies, that so he might be sure of them to all his purposes. And indeed, it may become them well enough, who are wiser in their generations than the children of light, it may possibly serve the policies of evil persons, but never the pure and chaste designs of Christianity, which admits no blood but Christs, and the imitating blood of Martyrs but knows nothing how to serve her ends by persecuting any of her erring children.

By this time I hope it will not be thought reasonable to say, he that teaches mercy to erring persons, teaches indifferency in Religion, unless so many Fathers, and so many Churches, and the best of Emperours, and all the World (till they were abused by Tyranny, Popery, and Faction) did teach indifferency, for I have shewn that Christianity does not punish corporally, persons erring spiritually, but indeed Popery does. The *Donatists* and the *Circumcellians*, and the *Arrians*, and the *Itaciani*, they of old did. In the middle Ages, the Patrons of Images did and the Papists at this day do, and have done ever since they were taught it by their *St. Dominick*.

Seventhly, And yet after all this, I have something more to exempt my self from the clamour of this Objection: For let all errors be as much and as zealously suppress'd as may

be, (the Doctrine of the following Discourte contradicts not that) but let it be done by such means as are proper instruments of their suppression, by Preaching and Disputation (so that neither of them breed disturbance) by charity and sweetness, by holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer.

For these ways are most natural, most prudent, most peaceable, and effectual. Only let not men be hasty in calling every dislik'd opinion by the name of Heresy, and when they have resolved, that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and persuasions.

And now if men will still say, I persuade to indifferency, there is no help for me, for I have given reasons against it, I must bear it as well as I can, I am not yet without remedy as they are, for patience will help me, and reason will not cure them, let them take their course, and I'll take mine:

Only I will take leave to consider this (and they would do well to do so too) that unless Faith be kept within its own latitude, and not called out to patrocinate every less necessary opinion, and the interest of every Sect, or peevish person; and if damnation be pronounced against Christians believing the Creed, and living good lives, because
b they

they are deceived, or are said to be deceived in some opinions less necessary, there is no way in the world to satisfy unlearned persons in the choice of their Religion, or to appease the unquietness of a scrupulous conscience: For suppose an honest Citizen whose employment and parts will not enable him to judge the disputes and arguings of great Clerks, sees factions commenc'd and manag'd with much bitterness by persons who might on either hand be fit enough to guide him; when if he follows either, he is disquieted and pronounced damned by the other (who also if he be the most unreasonable in his opinion will perhaps be more furious in his sentence) what shall this man do, where shall he rest the sole of his foot? Upon the Doctrine of the Church where he lives? Well! but that he hears declaimed against perpetually, and other Churches claim highly and pretend fairly for truth, and condemn his Church: If I tell him that he must live a good life, and believe the Creed, and not trouble himself with their disputes, or interesting himself in Sects and Factions, I speak reason: Because no law of God ties him to believe more than what is of essential necessity, and whatsoever he shall come to know to be revealed by God: Now if he believes his Creed he believes all that is necessary to all, or of it self, and if he do his moral endeavour beside, he can do no more towards
find

finding out all the rest, and then he is secured; but then if this will secure him, why do men press further and pretend every opinion as necessary, and that in so high degree that if they all said true, or any two indeed of them, in 500 Sects which are in the world (and for ought I know there may be 5000) it is 500 to one but that every man is damned, for every Sect damns all but it self, and that is damn'd of 499, and it is excellent fortune then if that escape; and there is the same reason in every one of them, that is, it is extream unreasonableness in all of them to pronounce damnation against such persons against whom clearly and dogmatically holy Scripture hath not; *In odiosis quod minimum est sequimur, in favoribus quod est maximum,* saith the Law, and therefore we should say any thing, or make any excuse that is in any degree reasonable, rather than condemn all the world to Hell, especially if we consider these two things, that we our selves are as apt to be deceived as any are, and that they who are deceived, when they used their moral industry that they might not be deceived, if they perish for this, they perish for what they could not help.

But however, if the best security in the world be not in neglecting all sects, and subsidiary divisions of men, and fixing our selves on points necessary and plain, and on honest and pious endeavours, according to our several capacities

ties and opportunities for all the rest, if I say all this be not through the mercies of God, the best security to all unlearned persons, and learned too, where shall we fix, where shall we either have peace or security? If you bid me follow your Doctrine, you must tell me why, and perhaps when you have I am not able to judge, or if I be as able as other people are, yet when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and so may you, or any man else you bid me follow, so that I am no whit the nearer truth or peace.

And then if we look abroad, and consider how there is scarce any Church, but is highly charg'd by many Adversaries in many things, possibly we may see a reason to charge every one of them in some things. And what shall we do then? The Church of *Rome* hath spots enough, and all the world is inquisitive enough to find out more, and to represent these to her greatest disadvantage. The Greek Church denies the procession of the holy Ghost from the Son; If that be false Doctrine, she is highly to blame, if it be not, then all the Western Churches are to blame for saying the contrary: And there is no Church that is in prosperity, but alters her Doctrine every Age, either by bringing in new Doctrines, or by contradicting her old, which shews that none are satisfied with themselves, or with their own confessions: And since all Churches believe

believe themselves fallible, that only excepted which all other Churches say is most of all deceived, it were strange if in so many Articles which make up their several bodies of Confessions, they had not mistaken every one of them in something or other: The *Lutheran* Churches maintain Consubstantiation, the *Zuinglians* are Sacramentaries, the *Calvinists* are fierce in the matters of absolute Predetermination, and all these reject Episcopacy, which the Primitive Church would have made no doubt to have called Heresy: The *Socinians* profess a portentous number of strange opinions; they deny the holy Trinity, and the satisfaction of our blessed Saviour: The *Anabaptists* laugh at Pædo-baptism; The *Ethiopian* Churches are *Nestorian*: where then shall we fix our confidence, or joyn Communion? to pitch upon any one of these is to throw the dice, if salvation be to be had only in one of them, and that every error that by chance hath made a Sect, and is distinguished by a name, be damnable.

If this consideration does not deceive me, we have no other help in the midst of these distractions, and dis-unions, but all of us to be united in that common term, which as it does constitute the Church in its being such, so it is the medium of the Communion of Saints, and that is the Creed of the Apostles, and in all other things an honest en-

* Clem. Alex. Stromat. i. ait
Philosophiam liberam esse præ-
stantissimam, quæ scil. versatur
in perspicaciter seligendis dog-
matis omnium Sectarum. Pola-
mo Alexandrinus sic primus phi-
losophatus est, ut ait Laërtius
in Proœmio, unde cognomi-
natus est, ἐκλεζόμενος, scil. τὸ
ἀρεῶντα ἐξ ἐκείνης τῆς ἀίρεσιν.

deavour to find out * what
truths we can, and a chari-
table and mutual permissi-
on to others that disagree
from us and our opinions.
I am sure this may satisfy
us, for it will secure us, but
I know not any thing else
that will, and no man can

be reasonably persuaded, or satisfied in any
thing else, unless he throws himself upon
chance, or absolute predestination, or his
own confidence, in every one of which
is two to one at least but he may miscarry.

Thus far I thought I had reason on my
side, and I suppose I have made it good upon
its proper grounds, in the pages follow-
ing. But then if the result be, that men
must be permitted in their opinions, and
that Christians must not Persecute Christi-
ans; I have also as much reason to reprove
all those oblique Arts which are not directed
Persecutions of mens persons, but they are
indirect proceedings, ungentle and unchristi-
an, servants of faction and interest, pro-
vocations to zeal and animosities, and de-
structive of learning and ingenuity. And
these are suppressing all the monuments of
their Adversaries, forcing them to recant
and burning their Books.

For it is a strange industry, and an impor-
tune diligence that was used by our forefathers

fathers; of all those Heresies which gave them battle and imployment, we have absolutely no Record or Monument, but what themselves who were Adversaries have transmitted to us, and we know that Adversaries, especially such who observ'd all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of the Enemy, are not always the best records or witnesses of such transactions. We see it now in this very Age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good Registers of the actions of the adverse side: And if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now, now I say that it is possible for any man, and likely that the interested adversary will discover the imposture, it is far more unlikely, that after Ages should know any other truth, but such as serves the ends of the representers. I am sure such things were never taught us by Christ and his Apostles, and if we were sure that our selves spoke truth, or that truth were able to justifie her self, it were better if to preserve a Doctrine we did not destroy a Commandment, and out of zeal pretending to Christian Religion, lose the glories and rewards of ingenuity and Christian simplicity.

Of the same consideration is mending of Authors, not to their own mind but to ours, that is, to mend them so as to spoil them; forbidding the publication of Books, in which there is nothing impious, or a-

gainst the publick interest, leaving out clau-
 tes in Translations, disgracing mens persons,
 charging disavowed Doctrines upon men,
 and the persons of the men with the conse-
 quents of their Doctrine, which they deny
 either to be true or to be consequent, false
 reporting of Disputations and Conferences,
 burning Books by the hand of the hang-man,
 and all such Arts, which shew that we ei-
 ther distrust God for the maintenance of his
 truth, or that we distrust the cause, or distrust
 our selves and our abilities: I will say no
 more of these, but only concerning the last,
 I shall transcribe a passage out of *Tacitus* in
 the life of *Julius Agricola*, who gives this
 account of it, *Veniam non petissem nisi incur-*
saturus tam sæva & infesta virtutibus tempora
Legimus cum Aruleno Rustico Pætus Thrasea
Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati
essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo au-
thores, sed in libros quoque eorum sævitum de-
legato Triumviris ministerio ut monumenta
clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac for-
urerentur, scil. illo igne vocem populi Rom. &
libertatem Senatus & conscientiam generis hu-
mani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sa-
pientiæ professoribus, atque omni bonâ arte in
exilium actâ, ne quid usquam honestum occur-
reret. It is but an illiterate Policy to thinke
 that such indirect and uningenuous pro-
 ceedings can amongst wise and free-men
 disgrace the Authors, and disrepute the

Discourses; And I have seen that the price hath been trebled upon a forbidden or a condemn'd Book, and some men in policy have got a prohibition that their impression might be the more certainly vendible, and the Author himself thought considerable.

The best way is to leave tricks and devices, and to fall upon that way which the best Ages of the Church did use: With the strength of Argument, and Allegations of Scripture, and modesty of deportment, and meekness, and charity to the persons of men, they converted misbelievers, stopped the mouths of Adversaries, asserted truth, and discountenanced error; and those other stratagems and Arts of support and maintenance to Doctrines, were the issues of heretical brains; the old Catholicks had nothing to secure themselves but the ἐν μέγᾳ of truth and plain dealing.

Fidem minutis diffecant ambagibus

Ut quisque linguâ est nequior.

Solvunt ligantque quæstionum vincula

Per syllogismos plectiles.

Væ captiosis Sycophantarum strophis,

Væ versipelli astutiæ.

Nodos tenaces recta rumpit regula

Infesta discertantibus:

Idcirco mundi stulta deligit Deus

Ut concidant Sophistica.

Prudent.
apothec.
hym. infi-
del.

And to my understanding, it is a plain Art and design of the Devil, to make us so
in

in love with our own opinions, as to call them Faith and Religion, that we may be proud in our understanding; and besides that by our zeal in our opinions, we grow cool in our piety and practical duties, he also by this earnest contention does directly destroy good life, by engagement of Zealots to do any thing rather than be overcome, and lose their beloved propositions. But I would fain know why is not any vicious habit as bad or worse than a false opinion? Why are we so zealous against those we call Hereticks, and yet great friends with drunkards, and fornicators, and swearers and intemperate and idle persons? Is it because we are commanded by the Apostle to reject a Heretick after two admonitions, and not to bid such a one God speed? It is a good reason why we should be zealous against such persons, provided we mistake them not. For those of whom these Apostles speak, are such as deny Christ to be come in the flesh, such as deny an Article of Creed; and in such odious things, it is not safe nor charitable to extend the grave men and punishment beyond the instance the Apostles make, or their exact parallel. But then also, it would be remembered that the Apostles speak as fiercely against communion with fornicators, and all disorders practical, as against communion with Hereticks, *If any man that is called a brother be*

Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat: I am certain that a Drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the Laws of Christianity, as a Heretick; and I am also sure that I know what drunkenness is, but I am not sure that such an opinion is Heresy, neither would other men be so sure as they think for if they did consider it aright, and observe the infinite deceptions, and causes of deceptions in wise men, and in most things, and in all doubtful Questions, and that they did not mistake confidence for certainty.

But indeed, I could not but smile at those jolly Fryers, two *Franciscans* offered themselves to the fire to prove *Savonarola* to be a Heretick, but a certain *Jacobine* offered himself to the fire to prove that *Savonarola* had true Revelations, and was no Heretick; in the mean time *Savonarola* preacht, but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of fire Ordeal; and put case all four had past through the fire, and dyed in the flames, what would that have proved? Had he been a Heretick or no Heretick, the more or the less, for the confidence of these Zealous Ideots? If we mark it, a great many Arguments whereon many Sects rely, are no better probation than this comes to. Confidence is the first, and the second, and the third part of a very great

Comm. i. 8. c. 19.

great many of their propositions.

But now if men would a little turn the Tables, and be as zealous for a good life, and all the strictest precepts of Christianity (which is a Religion the most holy, the most reasonable, and the most consummate that ever was taught to man) as they are for such propositions in which neither the life nor the ornament of Christianity is concerned, we should find, that as a consequent of this piety, men would be as careful as they could, to find out all truths, and the sense of all revelations which may concern their duty; and where men were miserable and could not, yet others that liv'd good lives too would also be so charitable, as not to add affliction to this misery; and both of them are parts of good life, to be compassionate, and to help to bear one anothers burdens, not to destroy the weak, but to entertain him meekly, that's a precept of charity and to endeavour to find out the whole will of God, that also is a part of the obedience the choice and the excellency of Faith, and he lives not a good life, that does not do both these.

But men think they have more reason to be zealous against Heresy than against a vice in manners, because Heresy is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil. Indeed if by a Heresy we mean that which is against an Article of Creed, and breaks par-

of the Covenant made between God and man by the mediation of Jesus Christ, I grant it to be a very grievous crime, a calling Gods veracity into question, and a destruction also of good life, because upon the Articles of Creed, obedience is built, and it lives or dies, as the effect does by its proper cause; for Faith is the moral cause of obedience: But then Heresy, that is, such as this, is also a vice, and the person criminal, and so the sin is to be esteem'd in its degrees of malignity, and let men be as zealous against it as they can, and imploy the whole arsenal of the spiritual armour against it, such as this, is worse than adultery or murder, in as much as the soul is more noble than the body, and a false doctrine is of greater dissemination and extent than a single act of violence or impurity. Adultery or murder is a duel, but Heresy (truly and indeed such) is an unlawful war, it slays thousands: The losing of Faith is like digging down a foundation; all the superstructures of hope, and patience, and charity fall with it: And besides this, Heresy of all crimes is the most inexcusable and of least temptation; for true faith is most commonly kept with the least trouble of any grace in the world; and Heresy of it self hath not only no pleasure in it, but is a very punishment; because faith as it opposes heretical or false opinions, and distinguishes from charity, consists

sists in meer acts of believing, which because they are of true propositions, are natural and proportionable to the understanding, and more honourable than false. But then concerning those things which men now a days call Heresy, they cannot be so formidable as they are represented, and if we consider that drunkenness is certainly a Damnable sin, and that there are more Drunkards than Hereticks, and that drunkenness is parent of thousand vices, it may better be said of this vice than of most of those opinions which we call Heresies, it is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil, and therefore as fit an object for a pious zeal to contest against, as is any of those opinions which trouble mens ease or reputation, for that is the greatest of their malignity.

But if we consider that Sects are made and opinions are called Heresies upon interest and the grounds of emolument, we shall see that a good life would cure much of this mischief. For first, the Church of *Rome* which is the great dictatrix of dogmatical resolutions, and the declarer of Heresy, and calls Heretick more than all the world besides, hath made that the rule of Heresy, which is the conservatory of interest, and the ends of men. For to recede from the Doctrine of the Church, with them makes Heresy, that is, to disrepute their Authority and not to obey them, not to be their subjects, not to give them

them the Empire of our conscience, is the great *κρίσιον* of Heresy.

So that with them, Heresy is to be esteemed clearly by humane ends, not by Divine Rules; that is formal Heresy which does materially disserve them, and it would make a suspicious man a little inquisitive into their particular Doctrines, and when he finds that Indulgences, and Jubilees, and Purgatories, and Masses, and Offices for the dead, are very profitable; that the Doctrine of primacy, of infallibility, of superiority over Councils, of indirect power in temporals, are great instruments of secular honour; would be apt enough to think that if the Church of *Rome* would learn to lay her honour at the feet of the Crucifix, and despise the world, and prefer *Jerusalem* before *Rome*, and Heaven above the Lateran, that these opinions would not have in them any native strength to support them, against the perpetual assaults of their adversaries, that speak so much reason and scripture against them. I have instanced in the Roman Religion, but I wish it may be considered also how far mens Doctrines in other Sects serve mens temporal ends, so far that it would not be unreasonable or unnecessary to attempt to cure some of their disorders or misperceptions by the salutary precepts of sanctity and holy life: Sure enough, if it did not more concern their reputation and their lasting interest to be counted

counted true believers rather than good li-
vers, they would rather endeavour to live
well, than to be accounted of a right opini-
on in things beside the Creed.

For my own particular I cannot but ex-
pect; that God in his Justice should enlarge
the bounds of the Turkish Empire, or some
other way punish Christians by reason of
their pertinacious disputing about things un-
necessary, undeterminable, and unprofitable,
and for their hating and persecuting their bre-
thren which should be as dear to them as their
own lives, for not consenting to one anothers
follies, and senseless vanities: How many vo-
lumes have been writ about Angels, about
immaculate conception, about original sin,
when that all that is solid reason or clear
Revelation, in all these three Articles, may
be reasonably enough comprized in fourty
lines! And in these trifles and impertinencies
men are curiously busie while they neglect
those glorious precepts of Christianity and
holy life, which are the glories of our Religi-
on, and would enable us to a happy eternity.

My Lord, thus far my thoughts have
carried me, and then I thought I had reason
to go further, and to examine the proper
grounds upon which these persuasions might
rely and stand firm, in case any body should
contest against them: For possibly men may
be angry at me and my design; for I do not
them great displeasure, who think no end

then well served, when their interest is dis-
served; and but that I have writ so unto-
wardly and heavily, that I am not worth a
confutation, possibly some or other might
be writing against me. But then I must tell
them I am prepared of an answer before hand:
For I think I have spoken reason in my Book,
and examined it with all the severity I have,
and if after all this I be deceived, this con-
firms me in my first opinion, and becomes a
new Argument to me, that I have spoken rea-
son; for it furnishes me with a new instance,
that it is necessary, there should be a mutu-
al compliance and Toleration, because even
then when a man thinks he hath most reason
to be confident, he may easily be deceived.

For I am sure, I have no other design but
the prosecution and advantage of truth, and
I may truly use the words of Gregory Nazian-
zen, *Non studemus paci in detrimentum veræ
doctrinæ, . . . ut facilitatis & mansuetudinis sa-
nam colligamus*: But I have writ this because
I thought it was necessary and seasonable,
and charitable and agreeable to the great pre-
cepts and design of Christianity, consonant
to the practice of the Apostles, and of the best
Ages of the Church, most agreeable to Scri-
pture and reason, to revelation and the nature
of the thing; and it is such a Doctrine, that if
there be variety in humane affairs, if the e-
ssence of things be not settled in a durable con-
sistence, but is changeable, every one of us all
may have need of it: I shall only therefore de-

fire that they who will read it may come to the reading of it with as much simplicity of purposes and unmix'd desires of truth, as I did to the writing it, and that no man trouble himself with me or my discourse, that thinks before hand that his opinion cannot be reasonably altered. If he thinks me to be mistaken before he tries, let him also think that he may be mistaken too, and that he who judges before he hears, is mistaken though he gives a right sentence:

Aristoph.
in Pluto.

Ὁυ χελιάζειν ἢ βοᾶν πρὶν ἀν μὰ θεῷ,
Was good counsel: But at a venture, I shall leave this sentence of Solomon to his consideration, *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, but a fool rageth and is confident*

Πάντα εἰδέναι οἷεσσι ἢ διαγυρίζεσσι, is a trick of boys and bold young fellows, says Aristotle, but they who either know themselves, or things, or persons, *οὐ περιδέσσιν ἀεὶ τὸ ἴσως, ἢ τὸ τάχα*. Peradventure yea, peradventure

2 Tim. 2.

no, is very often the wisest determination of a Question: For there are *μωροὶ ἢ ἀπαιδεῖτοι ζηῆτες* (as the Apostle notes) foolish and unlearned Questions, and it were better to stop the current of such fopperies by silence than by disputing them convey them to posterity. And many things there are of more profit, which yet are of no more certainty, and therefore boldness of assertion (except it be in matters of Faith and clearest Revelation) is an argument of the vanity of the Man, never of the truth of the proposition; for to

such

Such matters the saying of *Xenophanes* in *Varro*, is pertinent and applicable, *Hominis est hæc opinari, Dei scire*; God alone knows them and we conjecture.

Μένεις ἀπίστω. Ἦς ἐνδύει καλῶς.

And altho' I be as desirous to know what I should, and what I should not, as any of my Brethren the Sons of *Adam*; yet I find that the more I search, the further I am from being satisfied, and make but few discoveries, save of my own ignorance, and therefore I am desirous to follow the example of a very wise Personage, *Julius Agricola*, of whom *Tacitus* gave this testimony, *Retinuitque (quod est difficillimum) ex scientiā modum*; or that I may take my precedent from within the pale of the Church, it was the saying of *S. Austin*, *Mallẽm quidem eorum quæ à me quæstivisti habere scientiam quam ignorantiam, sed quia id nondum potui, magis eligo causam ignorantiam consteri, quam falsam scientiam profiteri*; And these words do very much express my sense. But if there be any man so confident as *Luther* sometimes was, who said that he could expound all Scripture, or so vain as *Eckius* who in his *Chrysopassus* ventur'd upon the highest and most mysterious Question of Predestination, *ut in eâ juveniles possit calores exercere*; such persons as these, or any that is furious in his opinion, will scorn me and my Discourse; but I shall not be much moved at it, only I shall wish that I had as much knowledge as they think me to want, and they as much

as they believe themselves to have. In the meantime, Modesty were better for us both and indeed for all men: For when men indeed are knowing amongst other things they are able to separate certainties from uncertainties; If they be not knowing, it is pity that their ignorance should be triumphant, or discompose the publick peace, or private confidence.

And now (my Lord) that I have inscrib'd this Book to your Lordship, altho' it be a designe doing honour to my self, that I have markt it with so honour'd and belov'd a Name, might possibly need as much excuse as it does pardon, but that your Lordship knows your own; for out of your Mines I have digg'd the Mineral; only I have stamp't it with my own Image, as you may perceive by the deformities which are in it. But your great Name in Letters will add so much value to it, as to make it obtain its pardon amongst all them that know how to value you, and all your relatives and dependants by the proportion of relation. For others I shall be incurious, because the number of them that honour you is the same with them that honour Learning and Piety, and they are the best theatre and the best judges; amongst which the world must needs take notice of my ambition, to be ascribed by my publick pretence to be what I am in all heartiness of Devotion, and for all the reason of the world,

My Honour'd Lord,

Your Lordship's most faithful

and most affectionate Servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

THE
CONTENTS
Of the SECTIONS.

SECTION I.

O*F the Nature of Faith, and that its duty is compleated in believing the Articles of the Apostles Creed.* Page 7.

SECT. II.

Of Heresy and the nature of it, and that it is to be accounted according to the strict capacity of Christian Faith, and not in Opinions speculative, nor ever to pious persons.
P. 24.

SECT. III.

Of the difficulty and uncertainty of Arguments from Scripture, in Questions not simply necessary, not literally determined. P. 79.

SECT. IV.

Of the difficulty of Expounding Scripture.
P. 99.

SECT. V.

Of the insufficiency and uncertainty of Tradition

The CONTENTS.

tion to expound Scripture, or determine Questions. p. 112.

SECT. VI.

Of the uncertainty and insufficiency of Councils Ecclesiastical to the same purpose. p. 136.

SECT. VII.

Of the fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his Expounding Scripture and resolving Questions. p. 169.

SECT. VIII.

Of the disability of Fathers or Writers Ecclesiastical, to determine our Questions, with certainty and Truth. p. 204.

SECT. IX.

Of the incompetency of the Church in its diffusive capacity to be Judge of Controversies, and the impertinency of that pretence of the Spirit. p. 218.

SECT. X.

Of the authority of Reason, and that it proceeding upon the best grounds is the best Judge. p. 223.

SECT. XI.

Of some causes of Error in the exercise of Reason, which are inculcate in themselves. p. 231.

SECT.

The CONTENTS.

SECT. XII.

Of the innocency of Error in opinion in a pious person.

P. 249.

SECT. XIII.

Of the deportment to be used towards persons disagreeing, and the reasons why they are not to be punished with death, &c.

P. 256.

SECT. XIV.

Of the practice of Christian Churches towards persons disagreeing, and when Persecution first came in.

P. 275.

SECT. XV.

How far the Church or Governours may act to the restraining false or differing opinions.

P. 285.

SECT. XVI.

Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to several Religions.

P. 289.

SECT. XVII.

Of compliance with disagreeing persons, or weak Consciences in general.

P. 294

SECT. XVIII.

A particular consideration of the Opinions of the Anabaptists.

P. 301.

SECT.

The CONTENTS.

SECT. XIX.

*That there may be no Toleration of Doctrines
inconsistent with piety or the publick good.*

P. 332.

SECT. XX.

*How far the Religion of the Church of Rome
is Tolerable.*

P. 336.

SECT. XXI.

*Of the duty of particular Churches in allowing
Communion.*

P. 353.

SECT. XXII.

*That particular men may communicate with
Churches of different persuasions, and how
far they may do it.*

p. 256.

Θεολογία Ἐκκλησιαστική.

OF THE
LIBERTY
OF
PROPHESYING.

THE infinite variety of Opinions in matters of Religion, as they have troubled Christendom, with interests, factions, and partialities; so have they caused great divisions of the heart, and variety of thoughts and designs amongst pious and prudent men. For they all seeing the inconveniencies which the dis-union of Perswasions and Opinions have produced directly or accidentally, have thought themselves obliged to stop this inundation of mischiefs, and have made attempts accordingly. But it hath happen'd to most of them as to a mistaken Physician, who gives excellent Physick but mis-applies it, and so misses of his cure; so have these men, their attempts have therefore been ineffectual; for they put their help to a wrong part, or they have endeavour'd to cure the symptoms, and have let the disease alone till it seem'd incurable. Some have endeavour'd to re-unite these factions by propounding such a Guide which they were all bound to follow;

B

hoping

hoping that the unity of a Guide, would have perſwade unity of minds; but who this Guide ſhould be at laſt became ſuch a queſtion, that it was made part of the fire that was to be quenched ſo far was it from extinguishing any part of the flame. Others thought of a Rule, and this muſt be the means of union, or nothing could do it. But ſuppoſing all the World had been agreed on this Rule, yet the interpretation of it was ſo full of variety, that this alſo became part of the diſeaſe, for which the cure was pretended. All men reſolv'd upon this, that though they yet had not hit upon the right, yet ſome way muſt be thought upon to reconcile differences in Opinion, thinking ſo long as this variety ſhould laſt Chriſt's Kingdom was not advanced, and the work of the Goſpel went on but ſlowly: Few men in the mean time conſidered, that ſo long as men had ſuch variety of principles, ſuch ſeveral conſtitutions, educations, tempers, and diſtempers, hopes, intereſts, and weakneſſes, degrees of light, and degrees of underſtanding, it was impoſſible all ſhould be of one mind. And what is impoſſible to be done, is not neceſſary ſhould be done: And therefore although variety of Opinions was impoſſible to be cured (and they who attempted it, did like him who clapt his ſhoulder to the ground to ſtop an Earthquake) yet the inconveniences ariſing from it might poſſibly be cured, not by uniting their beliefs, that was to be deſpair'd of, but by curing that which cauſed theſe miſchiefs, and accidental inconveniences of their diſagreeings. For although theſe inconveniencies which every man ſees and feels were conſequent to this diverſity of perſwaſions, yet it was but accidentally and

by chance, inasmuch as we see that in many things, and they of great concernment, men allow to themselves and to each other a liberty of disagreeing; and no hurt neither. And certainly if diversity of Opinions were of it self the cause of mischiefs it would be so ever, that is, regularly and universally, (but that we see it is not :) For there are disputes in Christendom concerning matters of greater concernment than most of those Opinions that distinguish Sects, and make factions; and yet because men are permitted to differ in those great matters, such evils are not consequent to such differences, as are to the uncharitable managing of smaller and more inconsiderable Questions. It is of greater consequence to believe right in the Question of the validity or invalidity of a death-bed repentance, than to believe aright in the Question of Purgatory; and the consequences of the Doctrine of Predetermination, are of deeper and more material consideration than the products of the belief of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of private Masses; and yet these great concernments where a liberty of Prophecyng in these Questions have been permitted, hath made no distinct Communion, no sects of Christians, and the others have, and so have these too in those places where they have peremptorily been determined on either side. Since then if men are quiet and charitable in some disagreements, that then and there the inconvenience ceases, if they were so in all others where lawfully they might (and they may in most,) Christendom should be no longer rent in pieces, but would be reintegrated in a new Pentecost, and although the Spirit of God did rest upon us in divided tongues,

yet ſo long as thoſe tongues were of fire not to kindle ſtrife, but to warm our affections, and inflame our charities, we ſhould find that this variety of Opinions in ſeveral perſons would be look'd upon as an argument only of diverſity of operations, while the Spirit is the ſame; and that another man believes not ſo well as I, is only an argument that I have a better and a clearer illumination than he, that I have a better gift than he, received a ſpecial grace and favour, and excel him in this, and am perhaps excelled by him in many more. And if we all impartially endeavour to find a truth, ſince this endeavour and ſearch only is in our power, that we ſhall find it being *ab extra*, a gift and an aſſiſtance extrinſecal, I can ſee no reaſon why this pious endeavour to find out truth ſhall not be of more force to unite us in the bonds of charity, than his miſery in miſſing it ſhall be to diſ-unite us. So that ſince a union of perſuaſion is impoſſible to be attained if we would attempt the cure by ſuch remedies as are apt to enkindle and encreaſe Charity, I am confident we might ſee a bleſſed peace would be the reward and crown of ſuch endeavours.

But men are now adays and indeed always have been, ſince the expiration of the firſt bleſſed Ages of Chriſtianity, ſo in love with their own Fancies and Opinions, as to think Faith and all Chriſtendom is concerned in their ſupport and maintainance, and whoever is not ſo fond and does not dandle them like themſelves, it grows up to a quarrel, which becauſe it is in *materia theologica* is made a quarrel in Religion, and God is entitled to it; and then if you are once thought an enemy to God it is our duty

to perfecute you even to death, we do God good ſervice in it; when, if we ſhould examine the matter rightly, the Queſtion is either in *materia non revelata*, or *minus evidenti*, or *non neceſſaria*, either it is not revealed, or not ſo clearly, but that wiſe and honeſt men may be of different minds, or elſe it is not of the foundation of faith, but a remote ſuper-ſtructure, or elſe of meer ſpeculation, or perhaps when all comes to all, it is a falſe Opinion, or a matter of humane intereſt, that we have ſo zealouſly contended for; for to one of theſe heads moſt of the Diſputes of Chriſtendom may be reduc'd; ſo that I believe the preſent fractions (or the moſt) are from the ſame cauſe which St. Paul obſerved in the *Corinthian* Schiſm, *when there are diviſions among you, are ye not carnal?* It is not the differing Opinions that is the cauſe of the preſent ruptures, but want of Charity; it is not the variety of underſtandings, but the diſunion of wills and affections; it is not the ſeveral principles, but the ſeveral ends that cauſe our miſeries: our Opinions commence and are upheld according as our turns are ſerv'd and our intereſts are preſerved, and there is no cure for us, but Piety and Charity. A holy life will make our belief holy, if we conſult not humanity and its imperfections in the choice of our Religion, but ſearch for truth without deſigns, ſave only of acquiring heaven, and then be as careful to preſerve Charity, as we were to get a point of Faith; I am much perſwaded we ſhould find out more truths by this means; or however (which is the main of all) we ſhall be ſecured tho' we miſs them; and then we are well enough.

For if it be evinced that one heaven ſhall hold men of ſeveral Opinions, if the unity of Faith

be not deſtroyed by that which men call differing Religions, and if an unity of Charity be the duty of us all even towards perſons that are not perſwaded of every propoſition we believe, then I would fain know to what purpoſe are all thoſe ſtirs, and great noiſes in Chriſtendom; thoſe names of faction, the ſeveral Names of Churches not diſtinguiſhed by the diviſion of Kingdoms, *ut Eccleſia ſequatur Imperium*, which ^{* Optat. lib. 3.} was the Primitive * Rule and Canon, but diſtinguiſhed by Names of Sects and Men; theſe are all become inſtruments of hatred, thence come Schiſms and parting of Communion, and then perſecutions, and then wars and rebellion, and then the diſſolutions of all Friendſhips and Societies. All theſe miſchiefs proceed not from this, that all men are not of one mind, for that is neither neceſſary nor poſſible, but that every Opinion is made an Article of Faith, every Article is a ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeal pretends for God, and whatſoever is for God cannot be too much; we by this time are come to that paſs, we think we love not God except we hate our Brother, and we have not the virtue of Religion, unleſs we perſecute all Religions but our own; for luke-warmneſs is ſo odious to God and Man, that we proceeding furiously upon theſe miſtakes, by ſuppoſing we preſerve the body, we deſtroy the ſoul of Religion, or by being zealous for faith, or which is all one for that which we miſtake for faith, we are cold in charity; and ſo looſe the reward of both.

All theſe errors and miſchiefs muſt be diſcovered and cured, and that's the purpoſe of this Diſcourſe.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

Of the nature of Faith, and that its duty is compleated in believing the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed.

First then it is of great concernment to know *Number 1.*
the nature and integrity of faith: For there begins our first and great mistake; for Faith although it be of great excellency, yet when it is taken for a habit intellectual, it hath so little room and so narrow a capacity, that it cannot lodge thousands of those Opinions which pretend to be of her Family.

For although it be necessary for us to believe *Numb. 2.*
whatsoever we know to be revealed of God, and so every man does, that believes there is a God: yet it is not necessary, concerning many things, to know that God hath revealed them, that is, we may be ignorant of, or doubt concerning the propositions, and indifferently maintain either part, when the Question is not concerning Gods veracity, but whether God hath said so or no: That which is of the foundation of Faith, that only is necessary; and the knowing or not knowing of that, the believing or dis-believing it, is that only which in *genere credendorum*, is in immediate and necessary order to salvation or damnation.

Now all the reason and demonstration of the *Numb. 3.*
world convinces us, that this foundation of Faith, or the great adequate object of the Faith that saves us, is that great mysteriousness of Christianity which Christ taught with so much

gence, for the credibility of which he wrought ſo many miracles; for the testimony of which the Apoſtles endured perſecutions; that which was a folly to the Gentiles, and a ſcandal to the Jews, this is that which is the object of a Chriſtians Faith; All other things are implicitly in the belief of the Articles of Gods veracity, and are not neceſſary in reſpect of the conſtitution of faith to be drawn out, but may there lie in the bowels of the great Articles without danger to any thing or any perſon, unleſs ſome other accident or circumſtance makes them neceſſary. Now the great object which I ſpeak of, is Jeſus Chriſt crucified; *Conſtitui enim apud vos nihil ſcribere præter Jeſum Chriſtum & hunc crucifixum*; ſaid St. Paul to the Church of Corinth: This is the Article upon the Confeſſion of which Chriſt built his Church, viz. only upon St. Peters Creed which was no more but this ſimple enunciation, *We believe, and are ſure that thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God*: And to this ſalvation particularly is promiſed, as in the caſe of *Marcus's Creed*, *John 11. 27*. To this the Scripture gives the greateſt Teſtimony, and to all them that confeſs it; *For every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God. And whoever confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*: The believing this Article is the end of writing the four Gospels: *For all theſe things are written, that ye might believe, that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God* and then that this is ſufficient follows, and that believing, viz. this Article (for this was only inſtanced in) ye might have life through his name. This is that great Article which in *genere credendorum*, is ſufficient diſpoſition to prepare

Mat. 16. 19.

3 Joh. 4. 2, 15.

Joh. 20. 31.

Catechumen to Baptiſm, as appears in the caſe of the *Ethiopian* Eunuch, whoſe Creed was only this, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, and upon this Confeſſion (ſaith the ſtory) they both went into the water, and the *Ethiop* was waſhed and became as white as Snow.

In theſe particular inſtances, there is no variety of Articles, ſave only that in the annexes of the ſeveral expreſſions, ſuch things are expreſſed, as beſides that Chriſt is come, they tell from whence and to what purpoſe: And whatſoever is expreſſed, or is to theſe purpoſes implied, is made articulate and explicate, in the ſhort and admirable myſterious Creed of St. Paul, *Rom. 10. 8. This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved*: This is the great and intire complexion of a Chriſtians faith, and ſince ſalvation is promiſed to the belief of this Creed, either a ſnare is laid for us, with a purpoſe to deceive us, or elſe nothing is of prime and original neceſſity to be believed, but this, *Jeſus Chriſt our Redeemer*; and all that which is the neceſſary parts, means, or main actions of working this redemption for us, and the honour for him is in the bowels and fold of the great Article, and claims an explicate belief by the ſame reaſon that binds us to the belief of its firſt complexion, without which neither the thing could be acted, nor the propoſition underſtood.

For the act of believing propoſitions, is not for it ſelf, but in order to certain ends; as Sermons are to good life and obedience; for (excepting that it acknowledges Gods veracity

city, and fo is a direct act of Religion) believing a revealed propofition, hath no excellency in it felf, but in order to that end for which we are instructed in fuch revelations. Now Gods great purpofe being to bring us to him by Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt is our medium to God, obedience is the medium to Chriſt, and Faith the medium to obedience, and therefore is to have its eſtimate in proportion to its proper end, and thoſe things are neceſſary which neceſſarily promote the end, without which obedience cannot be encouraged or prudently enjoyn'd: So that thoſe Articles are neceſſary, that is, thoſe are fundamental points, upon which we build our obedience; and as the influence of the Article is to the perſuaſion or engagement of obedience, fo they have their degrees of neceſſity. Now all that Chriſt when he preached, taught us to believe, and all that the Apoſtles in their Sermons propound, all aim at this, that we ſhould acknowledge Chriſt for our Law-giver and our Saviour; fo that nothing can be neceſſary by a prime neceſſity to be believed explicity, but ſuch things which are therefore parts of the great Article, becauſe they either encourage our ſervices or oblige them, ſuch as declare Chriſts greatneſs in himſelf, or his goodneſs to us: So that although we muſt neither deny nor doubt of any thing, which we know our great Maſter hath taught us: yet ſalvation is in ſpecial and by name annexed to the belief of thoſe Articles only, which have in them the indearments of our ſervices, or the ſupport of our confidence, or the ſatisfaction of our hopes, ſuch as are, Jeſus Chriſt the Son of the living God, the Crucifixion and

Reſur

Refurrection of Jeſus, forgivenes of ſins by his blood, Refurrection of the dead, and life eternal, becauſe theſe propoſitions qualifie Chriſt for our Saviour and our Law-giver, the one to engage our ſervices, the other to endear them; for ſo much is neceſſary as will make us to be his Servants, and his Diſciples; and what can be required more? This only. Salvation is promiſed to the explicate belief of thoſe Articles, and therefore thoſe only are neceſſary, and thoſe are ſufficient; but thus, to us in the formality of Chriſtians, which is a formality ſuper-added to a former capacity, we before we are Chriſtians are reaſonable creatures, and capable of a bleſſed eternity, and there is a Creed which is the Gentiles Creed, which is ſo ſuppoſed in the Chriſtian Creed, as it is ſuppoſed in a Chriſtian to be a man, and that is, *oportet accedentem ad Deum credere Deum eſſe, & eſſe remuneratorem quærentium eum.*

If any man will urge farther, that whatſoever is deducible from theſe articles by neceſſary conſequence, is neceſſary to be believed explicate: I Answer; It is true, if he ſees the reduction and coherence of the parts; but it is not certain that every man ſhall be able to deduce whatſoever is either immediately, or certainly deducible from theſe premiſes; and then ſince ſalvation is promiſed to the explicate belief of theſe; I ſee not how any man can juſtify the making the way to heaven narrower than Jeſus Chriſt hath made it, it being already ſo narrow, that there are few that find it.

In the purſuance of this great truth, the Apoſtles or the holy men, their Contemporaries and Diſciples compoſed a Creed to be a Rule of Faith

* *Apol. contr. Gent. c. 47. de veland.*

virg. c. 1.

† *In expoſit. Symbol.*

‡ *Serm. 5. de Tempore, c. 2.*

* *In Symbol. apud Cyprian.*

† *Omnes orthodoxi Patres affirmant Symbolum ab ipsis Apostolis conatum.*

Sext. Senen- tis, l. 2. bibl. vide Genebr.

l. 3. de Trin-

Faith to all Christians as appears in *Irenæus*, * *Tertullian*, † *St. Cyprian*, ‡ *St. Austin*, * *Ruffinus*, and divers † others; which Creed unless it had contained all the intire object of Faith, and the foundation of Religion, it cannot be imagin'd to what purpose it should serve; and that it was so esteem'd by the whole Church of God in all Ages, appears in this, that since Faith is a necessary pre-disposition to Baptism in all persons capable of the use of reason, all *Catechumens* in the Latin Church coming to Baptism, were interrogated concerning their Faith, and gave satisfaction in the recitation of this Creed. And in the East they professed exactly the same Faith, something differing in words, but of the same matter, reason, design, and consequence; and so they did at *Hierusalem*, so at *Aquileia*: This was that ὁρεθὶ καὶ ἀμώμητον πίστις, ἥν περ κηρύττει ἡ ἀγία τῆ θεῆ καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία κατ' ἐξέτασιν τῶν καίνισμῶν δεξαμένη. These Articles were τὰ ἑνὶ ἀρίων ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶ μετ' ἐκείνων διαλειφάντων ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς Θεῆ ἐκκλησίαις διδέγματα. *L. 5. Cod. de St. Trin. & fid. Cath. Cùm recta.* Now since the Apostles and Apostolical men and Churches in these their Symbols, did recite particular Articles to a considerable number, and were so minute in their recitation, as to descend to circumstances, it is more than probable that they omitted nothing of necessity; and that these Articles are not general principles, in the bosom of which many more Articles equally necessary to be believed explicitly and more particular, are infolded; but that it is as minute an explication of those *prima credibilia* I before reckoned, as is necessary to salvation.

And

And therefore *Tertullian* calls the Creed re- Numb. 3.
gulam fidei, quâ salvâ & formâ ejus manente in
ſuo ordine, poſſit in Scriptura tractari & inquiri ſi
quid videtur vel ambiguitate pendere vel obſcuritate
obumbrari. Cordis ſignaculum & noſtra militiæ Sa-
cramentum, *St. Ambroſe* calls it *lib. 3. de velandis*
virgin. *Comprehenſio fidei noſtræ atque perfectio,*
 by *St. Auſtin* *Serm. 115. Confefſio, expositio, re-*
gula fidei, generally by the Ancients: The profes-
 ſion of this Creed, was the expoſition of that ſay-
 ing of *St. Peter,* *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς Θεόν,*
The Answer of a good conſcience towards God. For
 of the recitation and profeſſion of this Creed,
 in Baptiſm, it is that *Tertullian de reſur. carnis*
 ſays, *Anima non lotionē, ſed reſponſione ſancitur.*
 And of this was the Prayer of *Hilary, lib. 12.*
de Trinit. Conſerva hanc conſcientiæ meæ vocem
ut quod in regenerationis meæ Symbolo Baptizatus
in Patre, Filio, Spir. S. profeſſus ſum ſemper obtineam.
 And according to the Rule and Reaſon of this
 Diſcourſe (that it may appear that the Creed hath
 in it all Articles *primò & per ſe,* primely and u-
 niverſally neceſſary) the Creed is juſt ſuch an
 explication of that Faith which the Apoſtles
 preached, *viz.* the Creed which *St. Paul* recites,
 as contains in it all thoſe things which entitle
 Chriſt to us in the capacities of our Law-giver
 and our Saviour, ſuch as enable him to the great
 work of redemption according to the predi-
 ctions concerning him, and ſuch as engage and
 encourage our ſervices. For, taking out the
 Article of Chriſts deſcent into Hell (which was
 not in the old Creed, as appears in ſome of the
 Copies I before referr'd to, in *Tertullian, Rufinus,*
 and *Irenæus;* and indeed was omitted in all the
 Confeſſions of the Eaſtern Churches, in the
 Church

Church of *Rome*, and in the *Nicene Creed*, which by adoption came to be the Creed of the Catholic Church) all other Articles are such as directly constitute the parts and work of our redemption, such as clearly derive the honour to Christ, and enable him with the capacities of our Saviour and Lord. The rest engage our services by proposition of such Articles which are rather promises than propositions; and the whole Creed, take it in any of the old Forms is but an Analysis of that which St. *Paul* calls the word of salvation, whereby we shall be saved, viz. that we confess Jesus to be Lord, and that God raised him from the dead; by the first whereof he became our Law-giver and our Guardian; by the second he was our Saviour; the other things are but parts and main actions of those two. Now what reason there is in the world that can enwrap any thing else within the foundation; that is, in the whole body of Articles simply and inseparably necessary, or in the prime original necessity of Faith, I cannot possibly imagine. These do the work, and therefore nothing can upon the true grounds of reason enlarge the necessity to the inclosure of other Articles.

Numb. 9.

° Vide *Isidor. de Eccles. offic. lib. 1. cap. 20. Suidam, Turnebium, lib. 2. c. 30. advers. Venant. For. in Exeg. Symb. Fenardens. in Iren. lib. 1. c. 2.*

Now if more were necessary than the Articles of the Creed, I demand why was it made the Characteristick note of a Christian from a Heretick or a Jew, or an Infidel? or to what purpose was it composed? Or if this was intended as sufficient, did the Apostles or those Churches which they founded, know any thing else to be necessary? If they did not, then either no thing more is necessary (I speak of matters of meer belief) or they did not know all the will of

the Lord, and ſo were unfit Diſpenſers of the myſteries of the Kingdom; or if they did know more was neceſſary, and yet would not inſert it, they did an act of publick notice, and conſign'd it to all Ages of the Church to no purpoſe, unleſs to beguile credulous people by making them believe their faith was ſufficient, having tryed it by that touch-ſtone Apoſtolicall, when there was no ſuch matter.

But if this was ſufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the Apoſtles admitted all to their Communion that believed this Creed, why ſhall we exclude any that preſerve the ſame intire? why is not our Faith of theſe Articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven, as it was in the Churches Apoſtolicall? who had guides more infallible that might without error have taught them ſuperſtructures enough, if they had been neceſſary: and ſo they did? But that they did not inſert them into the Creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty, as theſe Articles, makes it clear to my underſtanding, that other things were not neceſſary, but theſe were; that whatever profit and advantages might come from other Articles, yet theſe were ſufficient, and however certain perſons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and ſolely foundation of Faith upon which all perſons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was therefore neceſſary to be taught to all, becauſe of neceſſity to be believ'd by all: So that altho' other perſons might commit a delinquency *in genere morum*, if they did not know or did not believe, much more, becauſe they were obliged to further diſquiſitions in order to other ends, yet

yet none of theſe who held the Creed intire, could periſh for want of neceſſary faith, though poſſibly he might for ſupine negligence or affected ignorance, or ſome other fault which had influence upon his opinions, and his underſtanding, he having a new ſupervening obligation *ex accidente* to know and believe more.

Numb. 11.

Neither are we obliged to make theſe Articles more particular and minute than the Creed. For ſince the Apoſtles and indeed our bleſſed Lord himſelf promiſed heaven to them who believed him to be the Chriſt that was to come into the world, and that he who believes in him, ſhould be partaker of the reſurrection and life eternal, he will be as good as his word: yet becauſe this Article was very general, and a complexi- on rather than a ſingle propoſition; the Apoſtles and others our Fathers in Chriſt did make it more explicite, and though they have ſaid no more than what lay entire and ready form'd in the boſom of the great Article, yet they made their extracts, to great purpoſe, and abſolute ſufficiency, and therefore there needs no more deductions or remoter conſequences from the firſt great Article, than the Creed of the Apoſtles. For although whatſoever is certainly deduced from any of theſe Articles made already ſo explicite, is as certainly true, and as much to be believed as the Article it ſelf, becauſe *ex veris poſſunt nil niſi vera ſequi*, yet becauſe it is not certain that our deductions from them are certain, and what one calls evident, is ſo obſcure to another, that he believes it falſe; it is the beſt and only ſafe courſe to reſt in that explication the Apoſtles have made, becauſe if any of theſe Apoſtolical deductions were not demonſtrable

evidently to follow from that great Article to which ſalvation is promiſed, yet the authority of them who compil'd the Symbol, the plain deſcription of the Articles from the words of Scriptures, the evidence of reaſon demonſtrating theſe to be the whole foundation, are ſufficient upon great grounds of reaſon to aſcertain us; but if we go farther, beſides the eaſineſs of being deceived, we relying upon our own diſcourſes, (which though they may be true and then bind us to follow them, but yet no more than when they only ſeem trueſt,) yet they cannot make the thing certain to another, much leſs neceſſary in it ſelf. And ſince God would not bind us upon pain of ſin and puniſhment, to make deductions our ſelves, much leſs would he bind us to follow another mans Logick as an Article of our Faith; I ſay much leſs another mans; for our own integrity (for we will certainly be true to our ſelves, and do our own buſineſs heartily) is as fit and proper to be employed as another mans ability. He cannot ſecure me that his ability is abſolute and the greateſt, but I can be more certain that my own purpoſes and fidelity to my ſelf is ſuch. And ſince it is neceſſary to reſt ſomewhere, leſt we ſhould run to an infinity, it is beſt to reſt there where the Apoſtles and the Churches Apoſtolicall reſted; when not only they who are able to judge, but others who are not, are equally aſcertained of the certainty and of the ſufficiency of that explication.

This I ſay, not that I believe it unlawful *Numb. 12.* to be ſo ſurely ſafe for the Church or any of the *Antiquitates religionis*, or any wiſe man to extend his own Creed to any thing may certainly follow from any one of the Articles; but I ſay, that

C

no

no ſuch deduction is fit to be preſt on others as an Article of Faith; and that every deduction which is ſo made, unleſs it be ſuch a thing as is at firſt evident to all, is but ſufficient to make a humane Faith, nor can it amount to a divine, much leſs can be obligatory to bind a perſon on a differing perſuaſion to ſubſcribe under pain of loſing his Faith, or being a Heretick. For it is a demonſtration, that nothing can be neceſſary to be believed under pain of damnation, but ſuch propoſitions of which it is certain that God hath ſpoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certain that this is their ſenſe and purpoſe. For if the ſenſe be uncertain, we can no more be obliged to believe it in a certain ſenſe, than we are to believe it at all, if it were not certain that God delivered it. But if it be only certain that God ſpoke it, and not certain to what ſenſe our Faith of it is to be as indeterminate as its ſenſe, and it can be no other in the nature of the thing, nor is it conſonant to Gods juſtice to believe of him that he can or will require more. And this is of the nature of thoſe propoſitions which *Ariſtotle* calls *θεοις*, to which without any further probation, all wiſe men will give aſſent at its firſt publication. And therefore deductions inevident, from the evident and plain letter of Faith, are as great reſeſſions from the obligation, as they are from the ſimplicity, and certainty of the Article. And this I alſo affirm, although the Church of any one denomination, or repreſented in a council, ſhall make the deduction or declaration. For unleſs Chriſt had promiſed his Spirit to proteſt every particular Church from all errors leſs material, unleſs he had promiſed an abſolute univerſal infallibility *etiam in minutis*, unleſs ſuper-ſtructures be of the ſame neceſſity

neceſſity with the foundation, and that Gods Spirit
 both not only preſerve his Church in the being
 of a Church, but in a certainty of not ſaying any
 thing that is leſs certain; and that whether they
 will or no too; we may be bound to peace and
 obedience, to ſilence and to charity, but have
 not a new Article of Faith made; and a new
 propoſition though conſequent (as 'tis ſaid) from
 an Article of Faith becomes not therefore a part
 of the Faith, nor of abſolute neceſſity, *Quid un-* Contra hæreſ.
cap. 32.
quam aliud Eccleſia Conciliorum decretis eniſa eſt,
ſi ut quod antea ſimpliciter credebatur, hoc idem
antea diligentius crederetur, ſaid *Vicentius Lirinen-*
 ſe, whatſoever was of neceſſary Belief before is
 ſtill, and hath a new degree added by reaſon
 of a new light or a clear explication; but no pro-
 poſitions can be adopted into the foundation. The
 Church hath power to intend our Faith, but not
 to extend it; to make our belief more evident,
 but not more large and comprehensive. For
 Chriſt and his Apoſtles concealed nothing that
 was neceſſary to the integrity of Chriſtian Faith,
 for ſalvation of our Souls; Chriſt declared all the
 will of his Father, and the Apoſtles were Stew-
 ards and Diſpenſers of the ſame Myſteries, and
 were faithful in all the houſe, and therefore con-
 cealed nothing, but taught the whole Doctrin
 of Chriſt; ſo they ſaid themſelves. And in-
 deed if they did not teach all the Doctrin
 of Faith, an Angel or a Man might have taught us
 other things than what they taught, without de-
 ſerving an Anathema, but not without deſerving
 a bleſſing for making up that Faith intire which
 the Apoſtles left imperfect. Now if they taught
 the whole body of Faith, either the Church
 in the following Ages loſt part of the Faith (and
 then where was their Infallibility, and the effect

of thoſe glorious promiſes to which ſhe pretend
and hath certain Title; for ſhe may as well in
troduce a falſhood as loſe a truth, it being
much promiſed to her that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould
lead her into all truth, as that ſhe ſhall be preſer
ſerved from all errors as appears, *Joh. 16. 13.*
Or if ſhe retain'd all the Faith which Chriſt and
his Apoſtles conſign'd and taught, then no Age
can by declaring any point, make that to be an
Article of Faith which was not ſo in all Ages
of Chriſtianity before ſuch declaration. And in
deed if the * Church by declaring an Article can
make that to be neceſſary, which before was not
neceſſary, I do not ſee how it can ſtand with
the charity of the Church ſo to do (eſpecially af
ter ſo long experience ſhe hath had that all men
will not believe every ſuch deciſion or expreſſi
tion) for by ſo doing ſhe makes the narrow way
to Heaven narrower, and chalks out one path
more to the Devil than he had before, and yet
the way was broad enough when it was at the
narroweſt. For before, differing perſons might
be ſaved in diverſity of perſuaſions, and now af
ter this declaration if they cannot, there is no
other alteration made, but that ſome ſhall be
damned who before even in the ſame diſpoſi
tions and belief ſhould have been beatified per
ſons. For therefore, it is well for the Fathers of
the Primitive Church that their errors were
diſcovered, for if they had been conteſted (ſo that
that would have been called diſcovery enough)
vel errores emendaſſent, vel ab Eccleſiâ ejeſti ſent. But it is better as it was, they went
Heaven by that good fortune, whereas other
wiſe they might have gone to the Devil. And
yet there were ſome errors, particularly that of
St. Cyprian that was diſcovered, and he went
Heav

* Vide Jacob
Almain. in 3.
Sent. d. 25.
Q. Unic. Dub.
3. Parec ergo,
quod nulla ve
ritas eſt Catho
lica ex appro
batione Eccle
ſiæ vel Papa,
Gabr. Biel. in
3. Sent. Diſt.
25. q. Unic.
art. 3. Dub. 3.
ad finem.

Bellar. de lai
cis l. 3. c. 20.
S. ad primam
confirmatio
nem.

Heaven, 'tis thought; poſſibly they might ſo too for all this pretence. But ſuppoſe it true, yet whether that declaration of an Article of which with ſafety we either might have doubted or been ignorant, do more good, than the damning of thoſe many Souls occaſionally, but yet certainly and fore-knowingly does hurt, I leave it to all wiſe and good Men to determine. And yet beſides this, it cannot enter into my thoughts, that it can poſſibly conſiſt with Gods goodneſs, to put it into the power of man ſo palpably and openly to alter the paths and inſerts to Heaven, and to ſtreighten his mercies, unleſs he had furniſhed theſe men with an infallible judgment and an infallible prudence, and never failing charity, that they ſhould never do it but with great neceſſity, and with great truth, and without ends and humane deſigns, of which I think no Arguments can make us certain, what the Primitive Church hath done in this caſe: I ſhall afterwards conſider and give an account of it, but for the preſent, there is no inconſiſtency in ending there were the Apoſtles ended, in building where they built, in reſting where they left us, unleſs the ſame infallibility which they had, had ſtill continued, which I think I ſhall hereafter make evident it did not: And therefore thoſe extensions of Creed which were made in the firſt Ages of the Church, although true for the matter they were moſt true; yet becauſe it was not certain that they ſhould be ſo, and they might have been otherwiſe, therefore they ſhould not be in the ſame order of Faith nor in the ſame degrees of neceſſity to be believ'd with the Articles Apoſtolic; and therefore whether they did well or no in laying the ſame weight upon them, or whether they did lay the

ſame weight or no, we will afterwards conſider.

Numb. 13. But to return. I conſider that a foundation of Faith cannot alter, unleſs a new building be to be made, the foundation is the ſame ſtill; and this foundation is no other but that which Chriſt and his Apoſtles laid, which Doctrines is like himſelf, yeſterday and to day, and the ſame for ever: So that the Articles of neceſſary belief to all (which are the only foundation) they cannot be ſeveral in ſeveral Ages, and to ſeveral perſons. Nay, the ſentence and declaration of the Church, cannot lay this foundation, or make any thing of the foundation, becauſe the Church cannot lay her own foundation; we muſt ſuppoſe her to be a building, and that ſhe relies upon the foundation, which is therefore ſuppoſed to be laid before, becauſe ſhe is built upon it, or (to make it more explicate) becauſe a cloud may ariſe from the Allegory of building and foundation, it is plainly thus; The Church being a company of Men obliged to the duties of Faith and obedience, the duty and obligation being of the faculties of will and underſtanding to adhere to ſuch an object, muſt pre-ſuppoſe the object made ready for them; for as the object is before the act in order of nature, and therefore not to be produc'd or encreaſed by the faculty (which is receptive, cannot be active upon its proper object:) So the object of the Churches Faith is in order of nature before the Church, or before the act and habit of Faith, and therefore cannot be enlarged by the Church, any more than the act of the viſive faculty can add viſibility to the object. So that if we have found out what foundation, Chriſt and his Apoſtles did lay, that is what body and ſystem of Articles ſimply neceſſary they taught and requir'd of us to believe,

we

we need not, we cannot go any further for foundation, we cannot enlarge that ſyſtem or collection. Now then, although all that they ſaid is true, and nothing of it to be doubted or diſ-believed, yet as all that they ſaid, is neither written nor delivered (becauſe all was not neceſſary) ſo we know that of thoſe things which are written, ſome things are as far off from the foundation as thoſe things which were omitted, and therefore although now accidentally they muſt be believ'd by all that know them, yet it is not neceſſary all ſhould know them; and that all ſhould know them in the ſame ſenſe and interpretation, is neither probable nor obligatory; but therefore ſince theſe things are to be diſtinguiſhed by ſome differences of neceſſary and not neceſſary, whether or no is not the declaration of Chriſt and his Apoſtles affixing ſalvation to the belief of ſome great comprehenſive Articles, and the act of the Apoſtles rendring them as explicate as they thought convenient, and conſigning that Creed made ſo explicate, as a teſſera of a Chriſtian, as a comprehension of the Articles of his belief, as a ſufficient diſpoſition and an expreſs of the Faith of a *Catechumen* in order to Baptiſm: whether or no I ſay, all this be not ſufficient probation that theſe only are of abſolute neceſſity, that this is ſufficient for meer belief in order to Heaven, and that therefore whoſoever believes theſe Articles heartily and explicitly, *Θεὸς μένει ἐν αὐτῷ*, as St. John's expreſſion is, *God dwelleth in him*, I leave it to be conſider'd and judg'd of from the premiſes: Only this, if the old Doctours had been made Judges in theſe Queſtions, they would have paſſed their affirmative; for to inſtance in one for

*Lib. de ve.
land. Virg.*

all, of this it was ſaid by *Tertullian*, *Regula quidem fidei una omnino eſt ſola immobilis & irrefor- mabilis, &c.* *Hâc lege fidei manente cætera jam diſci- plina & converſationis admittunt novitatem cor- rectionis, operante ſcil. & proficiente uſque in fi- nem gratia Dei.* This Symbol is the one ſuffi- cient immoveable unalterable and unchangeable rule of Faith, that admits no increment or de- crement; but if the integrity and unity of this be preserv'd, in all other things men may take a liberty of enlarging their knowledges and pro- pheſyings, according as they are aſſiſted by the grace of God.

S E C T. II.

Of Heresy and the nature of it, and that it is to be accounted according to the ſtrict ca- pacity of Chriſtian Faith, and not in Opinions Speculative, nor ever to pious Per- ſons.

Numb. 1.

AND thus I have represented a ſhort draught of the Object of Faith, and its founda- tion; the next conſideration in order to our main deſign, is to conſider what was and what ought to be the judgment of the Apoſtles concerning Heresy: For although there are more kinds of vices, than there are of vertues; yet the number of them is to be taken by account- ing the tranſgreſſions of their vertues, and by the limits of Faith; we may alſo reckon the Analogy and proportions of Heresy; that as we have

have ſeen who was called faithfull by the Apoſtolicall men, we may alſo perceive who were liſted by them in the Catalogue of Hereticks, that we in our judgments may proceed accordingly.

And firſt the word Hereſy is uſed in Scripture indifferently, in a good ſenſe for a Sect or Diviſion of Opinion, and men following it, or ſometimes in a bad ſenſe, for a falſe Opinion ſignally condemned; but theſe kind of people were then call'd Anti-chriſts and falſe Prophets more frequently than Hereticks, and then there were many of them in the world. But it is obſervable that no Hereſies are noted *ſignantèr* in Scripture, but ſuch as are great errors practical in *materia pietatis*, ſuch whoſe doctrines taught impiety, or ſuch who denied the coming of Chriſt directly or by conſequence, not remote or wiredrawn, but prime and immediate: And therefore in the Code de S. Trinitate & fide Catholica, hereſy is called ἀρεβὴς δόξα, καὶ ἀθέμιτος διδασκαλία, a wicked Opinion and an ungodly doctrine.

The firſt falſe doctrine we find condemned by the Apoſtles was the opinion of *Simon Magus*, who thought the Holy Ghoſt was to be bought with money; he thought very diſhonourably to the bleſſed Spirit; but yet his followers are rather noted of a vice, neither reſting in the underſtanding, nor derived from it, but wholly practical; Tis Simony, not Hereſy, though in *Simon* it was a falſe opinion proceeding from a low account of God, and promoted by his own ends of pride and covetouſneſs: The great hereſy that troubled them was the doctrine of the neceſſity of keeping the Law of *Mofes*, the neceſſity of Circumciſion; againſt which doctrine they were there-

therefore zealous, becauſe it was a direct overthrow to the very end and excellency of Chriſt's coming. And this was an opinion moſt pertinaciously and obſtinately maintain'd by the Jews, and had made a Sect among the *Galatians*; and this was indeed wholly in opinion; and againſt it the Apoſtles oppoſed two Articles of the Creed, which ſerv'd at ſeveral times according as the Jews chang'd their opinion, and left ſome degrees of their error, *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and I believe the holy Catholick Church*; For they therefore preſs'd the neceſſity of *Moſes's* Law, becauſe they were unwilling to forgoe the glorious appellative of being Gods own peculiar people; and that Salvation was of the Jews, and that the reſt of the world were capable of that grace, no otherwiſe but by adoption into their Religion, and becoming Proſelytes: But this was ſo ill a doctrine, as that it overthrew the great benefits of Chriſt's coming; for *if they were circumciſ'd, Chriſt proſited them nothing*, meaning this, that Chriſt will not be a Saviour to them who do not acknowledge him for their Law-Giver; and they neither confeſs him their Law-Giver nor their Saviour, that look to be juſtified by the Law of *Moſes*, and obſervation of legal rites; ſo that this doctrine was a direct enemy to the foundation, and therefore the Apoſtles were ſo zealous againſt it. Now then that other opinion, which the Apoſtles met at *Jeruſalem* to reſolve, was but a piece of that opinion; for the Jews and Proſelytes were drawn off from their lees and ſediment, by degrees, ſtep by ſtep. At firſt, they would not endure any ſhould be ſaved but themſelves, and their Proſelytes. Being wrought off from this heighth by Miracles, and preaching
of

of the Apoſtles, they admitted the Gentiles to a poſſibility of ſalvation, but yet ſo as to hope for it by *Moses's* Law. From which foolery, when they were with much ado diſſuaded, and told that ſalvation was by Faith in Chriſt, not by works of the Law, yet they reſolved to plow with an Ox and an Aſs ſtill, and joyn *Moses* with Chriſt; not as ſhadow and ſubſtance, but in an equal confederation, Chriſt ſhould ſave the Gentiles if he was helpt by *Moses* but alone Chriſtianity could not do it. Againſt this the Apoſtles aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, and made a deciſion of the Queſtion, tying ſome of the Gentiles (ſuch only who were blended by the Jews in *communi patria*) to obſervation of ſuch Rites which the Jews had derived by tradition from *Noah*, intending by this to ſatiſfie the Jews as far as might be with a reaſonable compliance and condeſcenſion; the other Gentiles who were unmixt, in the mean while, remaining free as appears in the liberty *St. Paul* gave the Church of *Corinth* of eating Idol Sacrifices (expreſſly againſt the Decree at *Jeruſalem*) ſo it were without ſcandal. And yet for all this care and curious diſcretion, a little of the leaven ſtill remain'd: All this they thought did ſo concern the Gentiles, that it was totally impertinent to the Jews; ſtill they had a diſtinction to ſatiſfie the letter of the Apoſtles Decree, and yet to perſiſt in their old opinion; and this ſo continued that fifteen Chriſtian Biſhops in ſucceſſion were circumciſed, even until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, under *Adrian*, as *Enſebius* reports.

*Enſeb. l. 4.
Eccleſ. hiſt.
c. 5.*

First, By the way let me obſerve, that never *Numb. 4.*
any matter of Queſtion in the Chriſtian Church
was determin'd with greater ſolemnity, or more
full

full authority of the Church than this Queſtion concerning Circumciſion: No leſs than the whole College of the Apoſtles and Elders at *Jeruſalem*, and that with a Decree of the higheſt ſanction, *Viſum eſt ſpiritui ſancto & nobis*. Secondly, Either the caſe of the Hebrews in particular was omitted, and no determination concerning them, whether it were neceſſary or lawful for them to be circumciſed, or elſe it was involv'd in the Decree, and intended to oblige the Jews. If it was omitted ſince the Queſtion was *de re neceſſaria* (for *dico vobis*, I Paul ſay unto you, *if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing*) it is very remarkable how the Apoſtles to gain the Jews, and to comply with their violent prejudice in behalf of *Mofes's* Law, did for a time Tolerate their diſſent *etiam in re alioquin neceſſaria*, which I doubt not but was intended as a precedent for the Church to imitate for ever after: But if it was not omitted, either all the multitude of the Jews (which St. James then their Biſhop expreſſed by *τοὶ Καὶ μυριάδες*; Thou ſeeſt how many myriads of Jews that believe and yet are zelots for the Law; and Eusebius ſpeaking of Juſtus ſays, he was one *ex infinitâ multitudine eorum qui ex circumciſione in Jeſum credebant*,) I ſay all theſe did periſh, and their believing in Chriſt ſerv'd them to no other ends, but in the infinity of their torments to upbraid them with hypocriſie and hereſie; or if they were ſav'd, it is apparent how merciful God was and pitiful to humane infirmities, that in a point of ſo great concernment did pity their weakneſs, and pardon their errors, and love their good mind, ſince their prejudice was little leſs than inſuperable, and

Act. 21. 20.

1. 3. 32. Ec-
cleſ. Hiſt.

and had fair probabilities, at leaſt, it was ſuch as might abuſe a wiſe and good man (and ſo it did many) they did *bono animo errare*. And if I miſtake not, this conſideration St. Paul urg'd as a reaſon why God forgave him who was a Perſecutor of the Saints, becauſe he did it ignorantly in unbelief, that is, he was not convinc'd in his underſtanding, of the truth of the way which he perſecuted, he in the mean while remaining in that incredulity not out of malice or ill ends, but the miſtakes of humanity and a pious zeal, therefore *God had mercy on him*: And ſo it was in this great Queſtion of circumciſion, here only was the difference, the invincibility of St. Paul's error, and the honeſty of his heart cauſed God ſo to pardon him as to bring him to the knowledge of Chriſt, which God therefore did becauſe it was neceſſary, *neceſſitate medii*; no ſalvation was conſiſtent with the actual remanency of that error; but in the Queſtion of Circumciſion, although they by conſequence did overthrow the end of Chriſt's coming: yet becauſe it was ſuch a conſequence, which they being hindred by a prejudice not impious did not perceive, God tolerated them in their error till time and a continual dropping of the leſſons and dictates Apoſtolical did wear it out, and then the doctrine put on it's apparel, and became cloathed with neceſſity; they in the mean time ſo kept to the foundation, that is, Jeſus Chriſt crucified and riſen again, that although this did make a violent concuſſion of it, yet they held faſt with their heart, what they ignorantly deſtroyed with their tongue, (which *Saul* before his conversion did not) that God upon other Titles, than an actual dereliſtion of their error did bring them to Salvation.

And

Numb. 5. And in the deſcent of ſo many years, I find not any one Anathema paſt by the Apoſtles or their Succeſſors upon any of the Biſhops of *Jeruſalem*, or the Believers of the Circumciſion, and yet it was a point as clearly determined, and of as great neceſſity as any of thoſe Queſtions that at this day vex and crucifie Chriſtendom.

Numb. 6. Beſides this Queſtion, and that of the Reſurrection, commenc'd in the Church of *Corinth*, and promoted with ſome variety of ſenſe by *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* in *Asia*, who ſaid that the Reſurrection was paſt already, I do not remember any other hereſy nam'd in Scripture, but ſuch as were errors of impiety, *ſeductiones in materiâ practica*, ſuch as was particularly, forbidding to marry, and the hereſy of the *Nicolaitans*, a doctrine that taught the neceſſity of luſt and frequent fornication.

Numb. 7. But in all the Animadverſions againſt errors made by the Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, no pious perſon was condemn'd, no man that did invincibly err, or *bona mente*; but ſomething that was amiſs *in genere morum*, was that which the Apoſtles did redargue. And it is very conſiderable, that even they of the Circumciſion who in ſo great numbers did heartily believe in Chriſt, and yet moſt violently retain Circumciſion, and without Queſtion went to Heaven in great numbers; yet of the number of theſe very men, they came deeply under cenſure, when to their error they added impiety: So long as it ſtood with charity and without humane ends and ſecular intereſts, ſo long it was either innocent or conniv'd at; but when they grew covetous, and for filthy lucre ſake taught the ſame doctrine which others did in the ſimplicity of their hearts, then they turn'd Hereticks,
then

then they were term'd Seducers; and Titus was commanded to look to them, and to silence them; *For there are many that are intractable and vain babblers, Seducers of minds, especially they of the Circumcision, who seduce whole houses, teaching things that they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.* These indeed were not to be indured, but to be silenced, by the conviction of sound doctrine, and to be rebuked sharply, and avoided.

For heresy is not an error of the understanding, but an error of the will. Numb. 8.

And this is clearly insinuated in Scripture, in the stile whereof Faith and a good life are made one duty, and vice is called opposite to Faith, and Heresy opposed to holiness and sanctity. So in St. Paul, *1 Tim. I.*

For (saith he) the end of the Commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfained; a quibus quod aberrarunt quidam, from which charity, and purity, and goodness, and sincerity, because some have wandred, deflexerunt ad vaniloquium. And immediately after, he reckons the oppositions to faith and sound doctrine, and instances only in vices that stain the lives of Christians, *the unjust, the unclean, the uncharitable, the lyer, the perjur'd person, & si quis alius qui sana doctrina adversatur;* these are the enemies of the true doctrine. And therefore St. Peter having given

in charge, to add to our vertue patience, temperance, charity, and the like; gives this for a reason, for if these things be in you and abound, ye shall be fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that knowledge and Faith is *inter præcepta morum*, is part of a good life: * And Saint Paul calls Faith or the form of sound words, καὶ εὐσεβίαν διδασκαλίαν, *Quid igitur credulitas vel fides? opinor fideliter hominem Christo credere, id est, fidelem Deo esse, hoc est, fideliter Dei mandata servare.* So Sal- vian.

the

the doctrine that is according to godlineſs,
† *Δοξῆς* 1 Tim. 6. 3. † And *veritati credere*, and in
† *Χεῖρ* *injuſtitiâ ſibi complacere*, are by the ſame A-
† *ἀνὸν* *πνεύματος* poſtle oppoſed, and intimate, that piety and
† *σκέδα;* faith is all one thing; faith muſt be *ὅτις καὶ ἀπομύ-*
That's our intire and holy too, or it is not right. It was
Religion, or Faith, the the hereſy of the *Gnoſticks*, that it was no
whole man- matter how men lived, ſo they did but believe
ner of ſer- aright: Which wicked doctrine *Tatianus* a lear-
ving God, ned Chriſtian did ſo deteſt, that he fell into
C. de ſummâ a quite contrary, *Non eſt curandum quid quiſque*
Trinit. & ſide *credat, id tantum curandum eſt quod quiſque*
Cathol. *faciat*; And thence came the Sect *Encratites*:
Both theſe hereſies ſprang from the too nice
distinguishing the faith from the piety and good
life of a Chriſtian: They are both but one duty.
However, they may be diſtinguiſhed, if we
ſpeak like Philoſophers; they cannot be diſtin-
guiſhed, when we ſpeak like Chriſtians. For to
believe what God hath commanded, is in order
to a good life; and to live well is the product of
that believing, and as proper emanations from it,
as from its proper principle, and as heat is
from the fire. And therefore, in Scripture,
they are uſed promiſcuouſly in ſenſe, and in ex-
preſſion, as not only being ſubjected in the ſame
perſon, but alſo in the ſame faculty faith is as
truly ſeated in the will as in the underſtanding,
and a good life as meerly derives from the un-
derſtanding as the will. Both of them are
matters of choice and of election, neither of
them an effect natural and invincible or neceſ-
ſary antecedently (*neceſſaria ut fiant, non neceſſa-*
ria facta.) And indeed if we remember that
St. Paul reckons hereſy amongſt the works of the
flesh, and ranks it with all manner of practical
impieties, we ſhall eaſily perceive that if a man
mingled

mingles not a vice with his opinion, if he be innocent in his life, though deceiv'd in his doctrine, his error is his misery, not his crime; it makes him an argument of weakness and an object of pity, but not a person sealed up to ruin and reprobation.

For as the nature of faith is, so is the nature of heresy, contraries having the same proportion and commensuration. Now Faith, if it be taken for an act of the understanding meerly, is so far from being that excellent grace that justifies us, that it is not good at all, in any kind but in *genere natura*, and makes the understanding better in it self, or pleasing to God, just as Strength doth the Arm, or Beauty the Face, or Health the Body; these are natural perfections indeed, and so knowledge and a true belief is to the understanding. But this makes us not at all more acceptable to God; for then the unlearned were certainly in a damnable condition, and all good Scholars should be saved whereas I am afraid too much of the contrary is true. But unless Faith be made moral by the mixtures of choice and charity, it is nothing but a natural perfection, not a grace or a virtue; and this is demonstrably prov'd in this, that by the confession of all men of all interests and persuasions, in matters of meer belief, invincible ignorance is our excuse if we be deceived, which could not be, but that neither to believe aright is commendable, nor to believe awry is reprobable; but where both one and the other is voluntary and chosen antecedently or consequently, by prime election or *ex post facto*, and so comes to be consider'd in morality, and is part of a good life or a bad life respectively. Just so it is in heresy, if it be a design of

D

ambition,

* *Alieni sunt
a veritate qui
se obſcitant
multitudine.
Chryſt.*

ambition, and making of a Seſt (ſo *Erasmus* ex-
pounds *St. Paul* ἀγεννηὸν ἀνδρῶν, ſectarum * au-
thorem) if it be for filthy lucre ſake as it was in
ſome, that were of the circumciſion, if it be of
pride and love of preheminance, as it was in
Diotrephes ὁ φιλοπρεσβυτέρου, or out of peeviſhneſs
and indocibleneſs of diſpoſition, or of a con-
tentious ſpirit; that is, that their feet are not
ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of
peace; in all theſe caſes the error is juſt ſo
damnable, as is its principle, but therefore dam-
nable not of it ſelf, but by reaſon of its adhe-
rency. And if any ſhall ſay any otherwiſe, it
is to ſay that ſome Men ſhall be damned when
they cannot help it, periſh without their own
fault, and be miſerable for ever, becauſe of their
unhappineſs to be deceived through their own
ſimplicity and natural or accidental, but incur-
pable infirmity.

Numb. 10. For it cannot ſtand with the goodneſs of
God, who does ſo know our Infirmities, that
he pardons many things in which our wills in-
deed have the leaſt ſhare (but ſome they have)
but are overborn with the violence of an im-
petuous temptation; I ſay, it is inconſiſtent with
his goodneſs to condemn thoſe who err where
the error hath nothing of the will in it, who
therefore cannot repent of their error, becauſe
they believe it true, who therefore cannot make
compensation becauſe they know not that they
are tyed to dereliction of it. And although
all Hereticks are in this condition, that is
they believe their errors to be true; yet there
is a vaſt difference between them who believe
ſo out of ſimplicity, and them who are given
over to believe a lye, as a puniſhment or an ef-
fect of ſome other wickedneſs or impiety.

For

For all have a concomitant assent to the truth of what they believe; and no man can at the same time believe what he does not believe, but this assent of the understanding in Hereticks is caused not by force of Argument, but the Argument is made forcible by something that is amiss in his will; and although a Heretick may peradventure have a stronger Argument for his error than some true Believer for his right persuasion? yet it is not considerable how strong his Argument is (because in a weak understanding, a small Motive will produce a great persuasion, like gentle Physick in a weak Body) but that which here is considerable, is, what it is that made his Argument forcible. If his invincible and harmless prejudice, if his weakness, if his education, if his mistaking piety, if any thing that hath no venom, nor a sting in it, there the heartiness of his persuasion is no sin, but his misery and his excuse; but if any thing that is evil *in genere morum* did incline his understanding, if his opinion did commence upon pride, or is nourished by covetousness, or continues through stupid carelessness, or increases by pertinacy, or is confirmed by obstinacy, then the innocency of the error is disbanded, his misery is changed into a crime, and begins its own punishment. But by the way I must observe, that when I reckoned *obstinacy* amongst those things which make a false opinion criminal, it is to be understood with some discretion and distinction. For there is an obstinacy of will which is indeed highly guilty of misdemeanour, and when the School makes pertinacy or obstinacy to be the formality of heresy, they say not true at all, unless it be meant the obstinacy of the will and

choice; and if they do, they ſpeak imperfectly and inartificially, this being but one of the cauſes that makes error become hereſy; the adequate and perfect formality of hereſy is whatſoever makes the error voluntary and vitious, as is clear in Scripture, reckoning Covetouſneſs, and Pride, and Luſt, and whatſoever is vitious to be its cauſes? (and in habits, or moral changes and productions, whatever alters the eſſence of a habit, or gives it a new formality, is not to be reckoned the efficient but the form) but there is alſo an obſtinacy (you may call it) but indeed, is nothing but a reſolution and confirmation of underſtanding, which is not in a mans power honeſtly to alter, and it is not all the commands of humanity, that can be Argument ſufficient to make a man leave believing that for which he thinks he hath reaſon, and for which he hath ſuch Arguments as heartily convince him. Now the perſiſting in an opinion finally, and againſt all the confidence and imperiouſneſs of humane commands, that makes not this criminal obſtinacy, if the erring perſon have ſo much humility of will as to ſubmit to whatever God ſays, and that no vice in his will hinders him from believing it. So that we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh continuance in opinion from obſtinacy, confidence of underſtanding from peeviſhneſs of affection, a not being convinced from a reſolution never to be convinc'd upon humane ends and vitious principles:

Lib. 2. Ep. 1. *Scimus quosdam quod ſemel imbiberint nolle deponere, nec propoſitum ſuum facile mutare, ſed ſalvo inter collegas pacis & concordia vinculo quosdam propria qua apud ſe ſemel ſint uſurpat a retinere. Qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus, aut legem damus,* ſaith St. Cyprian. And he himſelf

was ſuch a one; for he perſiſted in his opinion of rebaptization until death, and yet his obſtinacy was not called criminal, or his error turned to hereſy. But to return.

In this ſence, it is that a Heretick is *ἀνὴρ ἐκ τῆς αἵσεως* Numb. 11. *ⲁⲡⲓⲛⲁⲓ*, ſelf-condemn'd, not by an immediate expreſs ſentence of underſtanding, but by his own act or fault brought into condemnation. As it is in the Canon Law, *Notorius percuffor Clerici* is *ipſo jure* excommunicate, not *per ſententiam latam ab homine*, but *à jure*. No man hath paſſed ſentence *pro tribunali*, but Law hath decreed it *pro ediſto*: So it is in the caſe of a Heretick. The underſtanding which is judge, condemns him not by an expreſs ſentence; for he errs with as much ſimplicity in the reſult, as he had malice in the principle: But there is *ſententia lata à jure*, his will which is his law, that hath condemn'd him. And this is gathered from that ſaying of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 13. *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived*: Firſt, they are evil men; malice and peeviſhneſs is in their wills; then they turn Hereticks and ſeduce others, and while they grow worſe and worſe, the error is maſter of their underſtanding, they are deceiv'd themſelves, *given over to believe a lye*, ſaith the Apoſtle: they firſt play the knave, and then play the fool; they firſt ſell themſelves to the purchaſe of vain-glory or ill ends, and then they become poſſeſſed with a lying ſpirit, and believe thoſe things heartily, which if they were honeſt they ſhould with Gods Grace diſcover and diſclaim. So that now we ſee that *bona fides in falſo articulo*, a hearty perſuaſion in a falſe Article does not always make the error to be eſteemed involuntary; but then only

when it is as innocent in the principle as it is confident in the preſent perſuaſion. And ſuch perſons who by their ill lives and vitious actions, or manifeſt deſigns (for by their fruits ye ſhall know them) give teſtimony of ſuch criminal indiſpoſitions, ſo as competent judges by humane and prudent eſtimate may ſo judge them, then they are to be declared Hereticks, and avoided. And if this were not true, it were vain that the Apoſtle commands us to avoid an Heretick: For no external act can paſs upon a man for a crime that is not cognoſcible.

Numb. 12. Now every Man that errs, though in a matter of conſequence, ſo long as the foundation is intire, cannot be ſuſpected juſtly guilty of a crime to give his error a formality of hereſy; for we ſee many a good Man miſerably deceiv'd (as we ſhall make it appear afterwards) and he that is the beſt amongſt Men, certainly hath ſo much humility to think he may be eaſily deceiv'd, and twenty to one but he is in ſomething or other; yet if his error be not voluntary, and part of an ill life, then becauſe he lives a good life, he is a good Man, and therefore no Heretick: No Man is an Heretick againſt his will. And if it be pretended that every Man that is deceived, is therefore Proud becauſe he does not ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of God or Man reſpectively, and ſo his error becomes a hereſy: To this I anſwer, That there is no Chriſtian Man but will ſubmit his underſtanding to God, and believes whatſoever he hath ſaid; but always provided, he knows that God hath ſaid ſo, elſe he muſt do his duty by a readineſs to obey when he ſhall know it. But for obedience or humility of the under-

underſtanding towards Men, that is a thing of another conſideration, and it muſt firſt be made evident that his underſtanding muſt be ſubmitted to Men; and who thoſe Men are, muſt alſo be certain, before it will be adjudg'd a ſin not to ſubmit. But if I miſtake not Chriſts ſaying [*call no man maſter upon earth*] is ſo great a prejudice againſt this pretence, as I doubt it will go near wholly to make it invalid. So that as the worſhipping of Angels is a humility indeed, but it is voluntary and a will-worſhip to an ill ſence, not to be excuſed by the excellency of humility, nor the virtue of Religion: ſo is the relying upon the judgment of Man, an humility too, but ſuch as comes not under that ὑπακοὴ πίστεως, that obedience of Faith which is the duty of every Chriſtian, but intrenches upon that duty which we owe to Chriſt as an acknowledgement that he is our great Maſter, and the Prince of the Catholick Church. But whether it be or be not, if that be the Queſtion whether the diſagreeing perſon be to be determined by the dictates of Men, I am ſure the dictates of Men muſt not determine him in that Queſtion, but it muſt be ſettled by ſome higher principle: So that if of that Queſtion the diſagreeing perſon does opine, or believe, or err *bonâ fide*, he is not therefore to be judg'd a Heretick, becauſe he ſubmits not his underſtanding, becauſe till it be ſufficiently made certain to him that he is bound to ſubmit, he may innocently and piously diſagree, and this not ſubmitting is therefore not a crime (and ſo cannot make a hereſy) becauſe without a crime he may lawfully doubt whether he be bound to ſubmit or no, for that's that the Queſtion. And if in ſuch Queſ-

ftions which have influence upon a whole system of Theology, a Man may doubt lawfully if he doubts heartily, because the authority of Men being the thing in Question, cannot be the judge of this Question, and therefore being rejected, or (which is all one) being questioned, that is, not believed, cannot render the doubting person guilty of Pride, and by consequence not of heresy, much more may particular questions be doubted of, and the Authority of Men examined, and yet the doubting Person be humble enough, and therefore no Heretick for all this pretence. And it would be considered that Humility is a duty in great ones as well as in Idiots. And as Inferiors must not disagree without Reason, so neither must Superiors prescribe to others without sufficient Authority, Evidence and Necessity too; And if Rebellion be Pride, so is Tyranny; and it being *in materia intellectuali*, both may be guilty of Pride of understanding, sometimes the one in imposing, sometimes the other in a causeless disagreeing; but in the Inferiours it is then only the want of Humility, when the guides impose or prescribe what God hath also taught, and then it is the disobeying Gods dictates not Mans, that makes the Sin. But then this consideration will also intervene, that as no dictate of God obliges Men to believe it, unless I know it to be such. So neither will any of the dictates of my Superiours, engage my Faith, unless I also know or have no reason to dis-believe, but that they are warranted to teach them to me, therefore because God hath taught the same to them which if I once know, or have no reason to think the contrary, if I disagree, my Sin is not in resisting humane Authority, but Divine

And therefore the whole buſineſs of ſubmitting our underſtanding to humane authority, comes to nothing; for either it reſolves into the direct duty of ſubmitting to God, or if it be ſpoken of abſtractedly, it is no duty at all.

But this pretence of a neceſſity of humbling the underſtanding, is none of the meanest arts whereby ſome perſons have invaded, and uſurpt a power over mens faith and conſciences, and therefore we ſhall examine the pretence afterwards, and try if God hath inveſted any Man or company of Men with ſuch a power. Numb. 13.
In the mean time, he that ſubmits his underſtanding to all that he knows God hath ſaid, and is ready to ſubmit to all that he hath ſaid if he but know it, denying his own affections and ends, and intereſts and humane perſuaſions, laying them all down at the foot of his great Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, that man hath brought his underſtanding into ſubjection, and every proud thought unto the obedience of Chriſt, and this is *ὁπακοὴ πίστεως*, the obedience of Faith, which is the duty of a Chriſtian.

But to proceed: Beſides theſe heresies noted in Scripture, the age of the Apoſtles, and that which followed, was infeſted with other heresies; but ſuch as had the ſame formality and malignity with the precedent, all of them either ſuch as taught practical impieties, or denied an Article of the Creed. *Egeſippus* in *Eusebius* reckons ſeven only prime heresies that ſought to deſlower the purity of the Church: That of *Simon*, that of *Thebutes*, of *Cleobius*, of *Dofitheus*, of *Gorthens*, of *Masborheus*; I ſuppoſe *Cerintus* to have been the ſeventh man, though he expreſs him not: But of theſe, except the laſt, we know no particulars; but that *Egeſippus* ſays,

* Vid. *Hilar.*
lib. 1. de *Trin.*

says, they were false Christs, and that their doctrine was directly against God and his blessed Son. *Menander* also was the first of a Sect, but he bewitched the people with his Sorceries. *Cerinthus* his doctrine pretended Enthusiasm or a new Revelation, and ended in lust and impious theorems in matter of uncleanness. The * *Ebionites* denied Christ to be the Son of God, and affirmed him $\psi\lambda\delta\omicron\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$, begot by natural generation, (by occasion of which and the importunity of the *Asian* Bishops *St. John* writ his Gospel) and taught the observation of *Moses's* Law. *Basilides* taught it lawful to renounce the faith, and take false oaths in time of Persecution. *Carpocrates* was a very bedlam, half-witch, and quite mad-man, and practis'd lust, which he call'd the secret operations to overcome the Potentates of the world. Some more there were, but of the same nature and pest, not of a nicety in dispute, not a question of secret Philosophy, not of atomes, and undiscernible propositions, but open defiance of all Faith, of all sobriety, and of all sanctity, excepting only the doctrine of the Millenniums, which in the best Ages was esteemed no heresy, but true Catholick Doctrine, though since it hath justice done to it, and hath suffered a just condemnation.

Numb. 15. Hitherto, and in these instances, the Church did esteem and judge of heresies, in proportion to the rules and characters of Faith. For Faith being a Doctrine of piety as well as truth, that which was either destructive of fundamental verity, or of Christian sanctity was against Faith, and if it be made a Sect, was heresy; if not, it ended in personal impiety and went no farther. But those who as *St. Paul* says, not only

only did ſuch things, but had pleaſure in them that do them, and therefore taught others to do what they impiouſly did dogmatize, they were Hereticks both in matter and form, in doctrine and deportment, towards God, and towards man, and judicable in both tribunals.

But the Scripture and Apoſtolical Sermons, *Numb. 16.* having expreſſed moſt high indignation againſt theſe maſters of impious Sects, leaving them under prodigious characters, and horrid repreſentments, as calling them *men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith, given over to ſtrong deluſions to the belief of a lye, falſe Apoſtles, falſe Prophets, men already condemned, and that by themſelves, Anti-chriſts, enemies of God;* and Hereſy it ſelf, *a work of the fleſh, excluding from the kingdom of heaven;* left ſuch impreſſions in the minds of all their ſucceſſours, and ſo much zeal againſt ſuch Sects, that if any opinion commenc'd in the Church not heard of before; it oftentimes had this ill luck to run the ſame fortune with an old hereſy. For becauſe the Hereticks did bring in new opinions in matters of great concernment, every opinion *de novo* brought in was lyable to the ſame exception; and becauſe the degree of malignity in every error was oftentimes undiſcernible, and moſt commonly indemonſtrable, their Zeal was alike againſt all; and thoſe Ages being full of piety, were fitted to be abuſed with an over-active zeal, ſo wiſe perſons and learned are with a too much difference.

But it came to paſs, that the further the ſucceſſion went from the Apoſtles, the more forward men were in numbring hereſies, and that upon ſlighter and more uncertain grounds. Some ſtep-ſteps of this we ſhall find, if we conſider the Sects

Sects that are ſaid to have ſprung in the firſt
 three hundred years, and they were pretty
 and quick in their ſprings and falls; fourſcore
 and ſeven of them are reckoned. They were
 indeed reckoned afterward, and though when
 they were alive, they were not condemn'd with
 as much forwardneſs, as after they were dead;
 yet even then, confidence began to mingle
 with opinions leſs neceſſary, and miſtakes in
 judgment were oftner and more publick than
 they ſhould have been. But if they were for-
 ward in their cenſures (as ſometimes ſome of
 them were) it is no great wonder they were
 deceiv'd. For what principle or *κρίσιμον* had
 they then to judge of heresies, or condemn
 them, beſides the ſingle dictates or decretals of
 private Biſhops? for Scripture was indifferently
 pretended by all; and concerning the meaning
 of it, was the Queſtion: now there was no ge-
 neral Council all that while, no opportunity
 for the Church to convene; and if we ſearch
 the communicatory letters of the Biſhops and
 Martyrs in thoſe days, we ſhall find but few
 ſentences decratory concerning any Queſtion
 of Faith, or new ſprung opinion. And in
 thoſe that did, for ought appears, the perſons
 were miſreported, or their opinions miſtaken,
 or at moſt, the ſentence of condemnation was
 no more but this; Such a Biſhop who hath
 had the good fortune by poſterity to be re-
 puted a Catholick, did condemn ſuch a man
 of ſuch an opinion, and yet himſelf err'd in a
 conſiderable matters, but meeting with better
 neighbours in his life time, and a more chari-
 table poſterity hath his memory preſerv'd in
 honour. It appears plain enough in the caſe
 of *Nicholas* the Deacon of *Antioch*, upon a
 miſtake

mistake of his words whereby he taught *παρὰ τὴν σάρκα* to abuse the flesh, viz. by acts of
 austerity and self denial, and mortification; some wicked people that were glad to be mi-
 staken and abused into a pleasing crime, pretended that he taught them to abuse the flesh by fil-
 thy commixtures and pollutions: This mistake was transmitted to posterity with a full cry, and
 acts afterwards found out to justify an ill opinion of him. For by St. *Hierome's* time it grew
 out of Question, but that he was the vilest of men, and the worst of Hereticks; *Nicolaus* Ad Geseh.
Antiochenus, omnium immunditiarum conditor, choros duxit famineos. And again, *Iste Nicolaus* Epist. de Fa- biano lapsa.
*Diaconus ita immundus extitit ut etiam in præ-
 sepi Domini nefas perpetrârit: Accusations that*
while the good man liv'd were never thought
of; for his daughters were Virgins, and his
Sons liv'd in holy cœlibate all their lives, and
himself liv'd in chaste Wedlock; and yet his
memory had rotted in perpetual infamy, had
not God (in whose sight the memory of the
Saints is precious) preserv'd it by the testi-
*mony of * Clemens Alexandrinus, and from him* * L. 3. Strom.
of † Eusebius and Nicephorus. But in the Ca- mar.
 talogue of Hereticks made by *Philastrinus* he † L. 3. c. 26. Hist.
 stands markt with a black character as guilt-
 y of many heresies: By which one testimony
 we may guess what trust is to be given to those
 Catalogues: Well, This good man had ill
 luck to fall into unskilful hands at first; but *Ire-*
næus, Justin Martyr, Lactantius, (to name no
 more) had better fortune; for it being still
 extant in their writings that they were of the
 Millenary opinion, *Papias* before, and *Nepos*
 after were censured hardly, and the opinion
 put into the catalogue of heresies, and yet these
 men

L. 23

men never ſuſpected as guilty, but like the children of the Captivity walkt in the miſt of the flame, and not ſo much as the ſmell of fire paſſed on them. But the uncertainty of theſe things is very memorable, in the Story of *Euſtathius* Biſhop of *Antioch* conteſting with *Euſebius Pamphilus*: *Euſtathius* accuſed *Euſebius* for going about to corrupt the *Nicene Creed*, of which ſlander he then acquitted himſelf (ſaith *Socrates*) and yet he is not cleared by poſterity, for ſtill he is ſuſpected, and his fame not clear: However *Euſebius* then ſcap'd well, but to be quit with his Adverſary, he recriminates and accuſes him to be a favourer of *Sabellius*, rather than of the *Nicene Canons*; an imperfect accuſation, God knows, when the crime was a ſuſpicion, proveable only by actions capable of divers conſtructions, and at the moſt made but ſome degrees of probability, and the fact it ſelf did not conſiſt in *indivifiſible* and therefore was to ſtand or fall, to be improved or leſſen'd according to the will of the Judges, whom in this caſe *Euſtathius* by his ill fortune and a potent Adverſary found hard towards him, inſomuch that he was for hereſy depoſed in the Synod of *Antioch*; and though this was laid open in the eye of the world as being moſt ready at hand, with the greateſt eaſe charged upon every man, and with greateſt difficulty acquitted by any man; yet there were other ſuſpicions raiſed upon him privately, or at leaſt talkt of *ex poſt facto*, and pretended as cauſes of his deprivation, leaſt the ſentence ſhould ſeem too hard for the offence. And yet what they were no man could tell, ſaith the ſtory. But it is obſervable what *Socrates* ſaith, as in excuſe of ſuch proceedings

Τέτοιο ὃ ὅτι πάντων εἰώδασι ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ποιεῖν οἱ ἱερεῖς.

ἐπίσκοποι, καὶ ἱεροφάντες μὲν καὶ ἀσεβῆ λέγοντες, τὰς δὲ αἰτίας τῆς ἀσεβείας ἔλεγον. “ It is the manner

“ among the Bishops, when they accuse them “ that are deposed, they call them wicked, but they publish not the actions of their impiety.

It might possibly be that the Bishops did it in tenderness of their reputation, but yet hardly; for to punish a person publicly and highly, is a certain declaring the person punished guilty of a high crime, and then to conceal the fault upon pretence to preserve his reputation, leaves every man at liberty, to conjecture what he pleaseth, who possibly will believe it worse than it is, in as much as they think his judges so charitable as therefore to conceal the fault, least the publishing of it should be his greatest punishment, and the scandal greater than his deprivation. * How-

ever this course, if it were just in any, was unsafe in all; for it might undo more than it could preserve, and therefore is of more danger, than it can be of charity. It is therefore too probable that the matter was not very fair; for in publick sentence the acts ought to be publick; but that they rather pretend heresy to bring their ends about, shews how easie it is to impute that crime, and how forward they were to do it: And that they might and did then as easily call Heretick as afterward, when *Vigilius* was condemned of heresy for saying there were *Antipodes*; or as the Fryars of late did, who suspected Greek and Hebrew of heresy, and call’d their Professors Hereticks, and had like to have put *Terence* and *Demosthenes* into the *Index Expurgatorius*; sure enough they rail’d at them *pro concione*, there

Simpliciter pateat vitium fortasse pusillum, Quod tegeretur majus creditur esse malum. Martialis.

therefore becauſe they underſtood them not, and had reaſon to believe they would accidentally be enemies to their reputation among the people.

Numb. 13. By this inſtance which was a while after the *Nicene* Council, where the acts of the Church were regular, judicial and orderly, we may gueſs at the ſentences paſſed upon hereſy, at ſuch times and in ſuch caſes, when their proceſs was more private, and their acts more tumultuary, their information leſs certain, and therefore their miſtakes more eaſie and frequent. And it is remarkable in the caſe of the hereſy of *Montanus*, the ſcene of whoſe hereſy lay within the firſt three hundred years, though it was repreſented in the Catalogues afterwards, and poſſibly the miſtake concerning it, is to be put upon the ſcore of *Epiphanius*, by whom *Montanus* and his Followers were put into the Catalogue of Hereticks for commanding abſtinence from meats, as if they were unclean, and of themſelves unlawful. Now the truth was, *Montanus* ſaid no ſuch thing, but commanded frequent abſtinence, enjoyned dry diet, and an aſcetic Table, not for conſcience ſake, but for Diſcipline; and yet becauſe he did this with too much rigour and ſtrictneſs of mandate, the Primitive Church miſlik'd it in him, as being too near their error, who by a Judaical ſuperſtition abſtain'd from meats as from uncleanneſs. This by the way will much concern them who place too much ſanctity in ſuch Rites and Acts of Diſcipline; for it is an eternal Rule and of never failing truth that ſuch abſtinences if they be obtruded as Acts of original immediate duty and ſanctity, are unlawful and ſuperſtitious; if they be for Diſcipline they may be

be good, but of no very great profit; it is that *ἀποστολὰ τὴν οὐρανὸν* which St. Paul ſays profiteth but little; and juſt in the ſame degree the Primitive Church eſteem'd them; for they therefore reprehended *Montanus*, for urging ſuch abſtinencies with too much earneſtneſs, though but in the way of Diſcipline, for that it was no more, *Tertullian*, who was himſelf a *Montaniſt*, and knew beſt the opinions of his own Sect, teſtifies; and yet *Epiphanius* reporting the errors of *Montanus*, commends that which *Montanus* truly and really taught, and which the Primitive Church condemn'd in him, and therefore repreſents that heresy to another ſenſe, and affixes that to *Montanus*, which *Epiphanius* believ'd a heresy, and yet which *Montanus* did not teach. And this alſo among many other things leſſens my opinion very much of the integrity or diſcretion of the old Catalogues of Hereticks, and much abates my confidence towards them.

And now that I have mentioned them casually in paſſing by, I ſhall give a ſhort account of them; for men are much miſtaken; ſome in their opinions concerning the truth of them, ſome believing them to be all true, ſome concerning their purpoſe, as thinking them ſufficient not only to condemn all thoſe opinions, here called heretical; but to be a precedent to all Ages of the Church to be free and forward in calling Heretick. But he that conſiders the Catalogues themſelves, as they are collected by *Epiphanius*, *Philaſtrius* and St. *Auſtin*, ſhall find that many are reckoned for Hereticks for opinions in matters diſputable and undetermined, and of no conſequence; and that in theſe Catalogues of Hereticks there are men

numbred for Hereticks, which by every ſide reſpectively are acquitted; ſo that there is no company of men in the world that admit theſe Catalogues as good Records, or ſufficient ſentences of condemnation. For the Churches of the Reformation, I am certain they acquit *Aerians* for denying prayer for the dead, and the *Euthyrians* for denying invocation of Saints. And I am partly of opinion that the Church of Rome is not willing to call the *Collyridians* Hereticks for offering a Cake to the Virgin *Mary*, unleſs ſhe alſo will run the hazard of the ſame ſentence for offering Candles to her: And that they will be glad with St. *Auſtin* (l. 6. de contr. gent. c. hareſ. c. 86.) to Excuse the **Tertullianists* for picturing God in a viſible corporal repreſentment. And yet theſe Sects are put in the black book by *Epiphanius* and St. *Auſtin*, and *Iſidore* reſpectively. I remember alſo that the *Oſſenians* are call'd Hereticks, becauſe they reſuſed to worſhip toward the Eaſt; and yet in that diſſent, I find not the malignity of a hereſy, nor any thing againſt an Article of Faith or good manners; and it being only in circumſtance, it were hard, if they were otherwiſe pious men and true believers, to ſend them to Hell for ſuch a trifſe. The *Parermentæ* reſuſed to follow mens dictates like ſheep, but would expound Scripture according to the beſt evidence themſelves could find, and yet were called Hereticks whether they expounded true or no. The **Paulicians* for being offended at croſſes, the *Proclians* for ſaying in a regenerate man all his ſins were not quite dead, but only curbed and aſſwaged, were called Hereticks, and ſo condemned; for ought I know for affirming that which all pious men

* D. Thom. l. 1.
contr. gent. c. hareſ. c. 86.
21.

* Euthym.
part 1. tit. 21.
Epiphanius hareſ.
64.

feel

feel in themſelves to be too true. And he that will conſider how numerous the Catalogues are, and to what a volume they are come in their laſt collections, to no leſs than five hundred and twenty (for ſo many hereties and Hereticks are reckoned by *Prateolus*) may think that if a re-trenchment were juſtly made of truths, and all impertinencies, and all opinions, either ſtill diſputable, or leſs conſiderable, the number would much decreaſe; and therefore that the Catalogues are much amiſs, and the name Heretick is made a *terriculamentum* to affright people from their belief, or to diſcountenance the perſons of Men, and diſrepute them, that their Schools may be empty and their Diſciples few.

So that I ſhall not need to inſtance how *Numb. 20.* that ſome men were called Hereticks by *Philaſtrius* for rejecting the tranſlation of the *Lxx.* and following the Bible of *Aquila*, wherein the great faults mentioned by *Philaſtrius*, are that he tranſlates *Χριςτὸν Θεὸν* not *Chriſtum*, but *unctum Dei*, and inſtead of *Emanuel* writes *Deus nobiſcum*. But this moſt concerns them of the Primitive Church with whom the tranſlation of *Aquila* was in great reputation, *is enim veluti plus a quibusdam intellexiſſe laudatur.* It was ſuppoſed he was a greater Clerk and underſtood more than ordinary; it may be ſo he did. But whether yea or no, yet ſince the other Tranſlators by the Confeſſion of *Philaſtrius*, *quadam prætermiſiſſe neceſſitate urgente cogentur*, if ſome wiſe men or unwiſe did follow a Tranſlatour who underſtood the Original well (for ſo *Aquila* had learnt amongſt the Jews) it was hard to call men Hereticks for following his Tranſlation, eſpecially ſince

* Philoſtr. 99.
eos inter ha-
reticos nume-
rat qui ſpira-
culum viſa in
libro Geneſ. in-
terpretantur
animam rati-
onalem, & non
ſolius gratiam
ſpiritus ſan-
cti.

the other Bibles (which were thought to have in them contradictories; and it was confeſſed, had omitted ſome things) were excuſed by neceſſity, and the others neceſſity of following *Aquila*, when they had no better was not at all conſidered, nor a leſs crime then hereſy laid upon their ſcore. * Such another was the hereſy of the *Quartodecimani*; for the *Eaſterlings* were all proclaimed Hereticks for keeping Eaſter after the manner of the Eaſt; and as *Socrates* and *Nicephorus* report, the Biſhop of *Rome* was very forward to Excommunicate all the Biſhops of the leſſer *Aſia* for obſerving the Feaſt according to the Tradition of their Anceſtors, though they did it modeſtly, quietly, and without faction; and although they pretended, and were as well able to prove their Tradition from *St. John*, of ſo obſerving it, as the *Western Church* could prove their Tradition derivative from *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*. If ſuch things as theſe make up the Catalogues of Hereticks (as we ſee they did) their accounts differ from the Precedents they ought to have followed, that is, the cenſures Apoſtolical, and therefore are unſafe Precedents for us; and unleſs they took the liberty of uſing the word hereſy in a lower ſence, then the world now doth, ſince the Councils have been forward in pronouncing Anathema, and took it only for a diſtinct ſence, and a differing perſuaſion in matters of opinion and minute Articles, we cannot excuſe the perſons of the men: But if they intended the crime of hereſy againſt thoſe opinions as they laid them down in their Catalogues, that crime (I ſay) which is a work of the fleſh, which excludes from the Kingdom of Heaven, all that I ſhall ſay againſt them, is, that the cauſleſs curſe ſhall return empty,

empty, and no man is damned the ſooner, be-
 cauſe his enemy crys *ὁ καταγγελλει*, and they that
 were the Judges and Accuſers might err as
 well as the perſons accuſed, and might need
 as charitable conſtruction of their opinions and
 practices as the other. And of this we are
 ſure they had no warrant from any rule of
 Scripture or practice Apoſtolicall, for driving
 ſo furiously and haſtily in ſuch decretory ſen-
 tences. But I am willing rather to believe
 their ſenſe of the word *heresy* was more gentle
 than with us it is, and for that they might have
 warrant from Scripture.

But by the way, I obſerve that although theſe
 Catalogues are a great inſtance to ſhew that
 they whoſe Age and Spirits were far diſtant
 from the Apoſtles, had alſo other judgments
 concerning Faith and Heresy, than the Apoſtles
 had, and the Ages Apoſtolicall; yet theſe Ca-
 talogues although they are reports of heresies
 in the ſecond and third Ages, are not to be
 put upon the account of thoſe Ages, nor to be
 reckoned as an inſtance of their judgment,
 which although it was in ſome degrees more
 culpable than that of their Predeceſſors, yet in
 reſpect of the following Ages it was innocent
 and modeſt. But theſe Catalogues I ſpeak of,
 were ſet down according to the ſenſe of the
 then preſent ages, in which as they in all proba-
 bility did differ from the apprehenſions of the
 former Centuries, ſo it is certain, there were
 differing learnings, other fancies, divers re-
 preſentments and judgments of men depend-
 ing upon circumſtances which the firſt Ages
 knew, and the following Ages did not; and
 therefore the Catalogues were drawn with
 ſome truth, but leſs certainty, as appears in their
 differing

Numb. 24.

differing about the Authors of ſome hereties; ſeveral opinions imputed to the ſame, and ſome put in the roll of Hereticks by one, which the other left out; which to me is an Argument that the Collectors were determin'd, not by the ſenſe and ſentences of the three firſt Ages, but by themſelves, and ſome circumſtances about them, which to reckon for Hereticks, which not. And that they themſelves were the prime Judges, or perhaps ſome in their own Age together with them; but there was not any ſufficient external judicatory competent to declare heresy that by any publick or ſufficient ſentence or acts of Court had furniſhed them with warrant for their Catalogues. And therefore they are no Argument ſufficient that the firſt Ages of the Church, which certainly were the beſt, did much recede from that which I ſhewed to be the ſenſe of the Scripture, and the practice of the Apoſtles; they all contented themſelves with the Apoſtles Creed as the rule of the Faith; and therefore were not forward to judge of heresy, but by analogy to their rule of Faith: And thoſe Catalogues made after theſe Ages are not ſufficient Arguments that they did otherwiſe; but rather of the weakneſs of ſome perſons, or of the ſpirit and genius of the Age in which the Compilers liv'd, in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the name of hereties, might grow to be a deſign to ſerve ends, and to promote intereſts, as often as an act of zeal and juſt indignation againſt evil perſons deſtroyers of the Faith and corrupters of manners.

Numb. 22. For whatever private mens opinions were, yet till the *Nicene Council*, the rule of Faith was intire in the Apoſtles Creed, and provided they retained that, eaſily they broke not the unity of Faith,

Faith
bly
were
brea
the
and
ſtand
for a
gan
whic
Cypr
was
as be
by th
but f
was
but g
ſelf;
comm
that
tizati
rity,
here
unlik
error
neſs
an o
truth
is ſup
preſſe
that
the ſi
accou
St. *
man,
error
varie

Faith, however differing opinions might poſſibly commence in ſuch things in which a liberty were better ſuffered than prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the Queſtion between *St. Cyprian* of *Carthage*; and *Stephen* Biſhop of *Rome*, in which one inſtance it is eaſie to ſee what was lawful and ſafe for a wiſe and good man, and yet how others began even then to be abuſed by that temptation, which ſince hath invaded all Chriſtendom. *St. Cyprian* re-baptized Hereticks and thought he was bound ſo to do; calls a Synod in *Africk* as being Metropolitan, and confirms his opinion by the conſent of his Suffragans and Brethren, but ſtill with ſo much modeſty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judg'd him not, but gave him that liberty that he deſired himſelf; *Stephen* Biſhop of *Rome* grows angry, Excommunicates the Biſhops of *Aſia* and *Africa*, that in divers Synods had conſented to rebaptization, and without peace, and without charity, condemns them for Hereticks. Indeed here was the rareſt mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have obſerved. Here was error of opinion with much modeſty and ſweetneſs of temper on one ſide; and on the other, an over-active and impetuous zeal to atteſt a truth, it uſes not to be ſo, for error uſually is ſupported with confidence, and truth ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanc'd by indifferency. But that it might appear that the error was not the ſin but the uncharitableneſs, *Stephen* was accounted a zealous and furious perſon, and *St. * Cyprian* though deceived, yet a very good man, and of great ſanctity. For although every error is to be oppoſed, yet according to the variety of errors, ſo is there variety of proceedings.

differing about the Authors of ſome herelies; ſeveral opinions imputed to the ſame, and ſome put in the roll of Hereticks by one, which the other left out; which to me is an Argument that the Collectors were determin'd, not by the ſenſe and ſentences of the three firſt Ages, but by themſelves; and ſome circumſtances about them, which to reckon for Hereticks, which not. And that they themſelves were the prime Judges, or perhaps ſome in their own Age together with them; but there was not any ſufficient external judicatory competent to declare heresy that by any publick or ſufficient ſentence or acts of Court had furniſhed them with warrant for their Catalogues. And therefore they are no Argument ſufficient that the firſt Ages of the Church, which certainly were the beſt, did much recede from that which I ſhewed to be the ſenſe of the Scripture, and the practice of the Apoſtles; they all contented themſelves with the Apoſtles Creed as the rule of the Faith; and therefore were not forward to judge of heresy, but by analogy to their rule of Faith: And thoſe Catalogues made after theſe Ages are not ſufficient Arguments that they did otherwiſe; but rather of the weakneſs of ſome perſons, or of the ſpirit and genius of the Age in which the Compilers liv'd, in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the name of herelies, might grow to be a deſign to ſerve ends, and to promote intereſts, as often as an act of zeal and juſt indignation againſt evil perſons deſtroyers of the Faith and corrupters of manners.

Numb. 22. For whatever private mens opinions were, yet till the *Nicene Council*, the rule of Faith was intire in the Apoſtles Creed, and provided they retained that, eaſily they broke not the unity of Faith,

Faith.
bly co
were
breac
the C
and S
ſtance
for a
gan e
which
Cypri
was
as be
by th
but fl
was
but g
ſelf;
comm
that
tizati
rity,
here
unlik
erro
neſs
an o
truth
is ſu
preſſ
that
the
acco
St. *
man
erro
vari

Faith, however differing opinions might poſſibly commence in ſuch things in which a liberty were better ſuffered than prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the Queſtion between *St. Cyprian of Carthage*; and *Stephen Biſhop of Rome*, in which one inſtance it is eaſie to ſee what was lawful and ſafe for a wiſe and good man, and yet how others began even then to be abuſed by that temptation, which ſince hath invaded all Chriſtendom. *St. Cyprian* re-baptized Hereticks and thought he was bound ſo to do; calls a Synod in *Africk* as being Metropolitan, and confirms his opinion by the conſent of his Suffragans and Brethren, but ſtill with ſo much modeſty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judg'd him not, but gave him that liberty that he deſired himſelf; *Stephen Biſhop of Rome* grows angry, Excommunicates the Biſhops of *Aſia* and *Africa*, that in divers Synods had conſented to rebaptization, and without peace, and without charity, condemns them for Hereticks. Indeed here was the rareſt mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have obſerved. Here was error of opinion with much modeſty and ſweetneſs of temper on one ſide; and on the other, an over-active and impetuous zeal to atteſt a truth, it uſes not to be ſo, for error uſually is ſupported with confidence, and truth ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanc'd by indifferency. But that it might appear that the error was not the ſin but the uncharitableneſs, *Stephen* was accounted a zealous and furious perſon, and *St. * Cyprian* though deceived, yet a very good man, and of great ſanctity. For although every error is to be oppoſed, yet according to the variety of errors, ſo is there variety of proceedings.

ceedings. If it be against Faith, that is, a destruction of any part of the foundation, it is with zeal to be resisted, and we have for it an Apostolical warrant, *contend earnestly for the Faith*; but then as these things recede farther from the foundation, our certainty is the less, and their necessity not so much, and therefore it were very fit, that our confidence should be according to our evidence, and our zeal according to our confidence, and our confidence should then be the Rule of our Communion; and the lightness of an Article should be considered with the weight of a precept of charity. And therefore, there are some errors to be reprov'd, rather by a private friend than a publick censure, and the persons of the men not avoided but admonish'd, and their Doctrine reject'd, not their Communion; few opinions are of that malignity which are to be reject'd with the same exterminating spirit, and confidence of averfation, with which the first Teachers of Christianity condemn'd *Ebion*, *Manes* and *Cerintus*; and in the condemnation of Hereticks, the personal iniquity is more considerable than the obliquity of the doctrine, not for the rejection of the Article, but for censuring the persons; and therefore it is the piety of the man that excus'd St. *Cyprian*, which is a certain Argument that it is not the opinion, but the impiety that condemns and makes the Heretick. And this was it which *Vincentius Livinensis* said in this very case of St. *Cyprian*, *Unius & ejusdem opinionis (mirum videri potest) judicamus aucthores Catholicos, & sequaces hareticos. Excusamus Magistros, & condemnamus Scholasticos. Qui scripserunt libros sunt heredes Cæli, quorum librorum defensores detruduntur ad infernum.* Which saying,

Adv. hares.
c. 11.

if

it we confront againſt the ſaying of *Salvian* condemning the firſt Authors of the *Arrian* Sect, and acquitting the Followers, we are taught by theſe two wiſe Men, that an error is not it that ſends a Man to Hell, but he that begins the heresy, and is the Author of the Sect, is the Man mark'd out to ruin; and his Followers ſcap'd, when the *Heresiarch* commenc'd the error upon Pride and Ambition, and his Followers went after him in ſimplicity of their heart; and ſo it was moſt commonly: but on the contrary, when the firſt Man in the opinion was honeſtly and invincibly deceived, as *St. Cyprian* was, and that his Scholars to maintain their credit, or their ends, maintained the opinion, not for the excellency of the Reason perſuading, but for the benefit and accruments, or peevishneſs, as did the *Donatiſts*, *qui de Cypriani authoritate ſibi carnaliter blandiuntur*, as *St. Auſtin* ſaid of them; then the Scholars are the Hereticks, and the Maſter is a Catholick. For his error is not the heresy formally, and an erring Perſon may be a Catholick. A wicked Perſon in his error becomes Heretick, when the good Man in the ſame error ſhall have all the rewards of Faith. For whatever an ill Man believes, if he therefore believe it becauſe it ſerves his own ends, be his belief true or falſe, the Man hath an heretical Mind, for to ſerve his own ends, his Mind is prepared to believe a Lye. But a good Man that believes what according to his light, and upon the uſe of his moral induſtry he thinks true, whether he hits upon the right or no, becauſe he hath a mind deſirous of Truth, and prepared to believe every Truth, is therefore acceptable to God, becauſe nothing hindred him from it, but what he could not help, his
miſery

miſery and his weakneſs, which being imperfections meerly natural, which God never puniſhes, he ſtands fair for a bleſſing of his morality, which God always accepts. So that now if *Stephen* had followed the example of God Almighty, or retained but the ſame peaceable ſpirit which his Brother of *Carthage* did, he might with more advantage to truth, and reputation both of wiſdom and piety have done his duty in atteſting what he believ'd to be true; for we are as much bound to be zealous purſuers of Peace as earneſt contenders for the Faith. I am ſure more earneſt we ought to be for the Peace of the Church, than for an Article which is not of the Faith, as this Queſtion of re-baptization was not; for *St Cyprian* died in belief againſt it, and yet was a Catholick, and a Martyr for the Chriſtian Faith.

Numb. 23. The ſum is this, *St. Cyprian* did right in a wrong cauſe (as it hath been ſince judged) and *Stephen* did ill in a good cauſe; as far then as Piety and Charity is to be preferr'd before a true opinion, ſo far is *St. Cyprian's* practice a better precedent for us, and an example of primitive ſanctity, than the zeal and indiscretion of *Stephen*: *St. Cyprian* had not learn'd to forbid to any one a liberty of Propheſying or Interpretation, if he tranſgreſſed not the foundation of Faith and the Creed of the Apoſtles.

Numb. 24. Well thus it was, and thus it ought to be in the firſt Ages, the Faith of Chriſtendom reſted ſtill upon the ſame Foundation, and the judgments of heresies were accordingly, or were amiſs; but the firſt great violation of this truth was, when General Councils came in, and the Symbols were enlarged, and new Articles were made as much of neceſſity to be believed as the

Creed

Creed of the Apoſtles, and damnation threatened to them that did diſſent, and at laſt the Creeds multiplied in number, and in Articles, and the liberty of propheſying began to be ſomething reſtrained.

And this was of ſo much the more force and efficacy, becauſe it began upon great reaſon, and in the firſt inſtance, with ſucceſs good enough. For I am much pleaſed with the enlarging of the Creed, which the Council of Nice made, becauſe they enlarged it to my ſenſe; but I am not ſure that others are ſatisfied with it; While we look upon the Article they did determine, we ſee all things well enough; but there are ſome wiſe perſonages conſider it in all circumſtances, and think the Church had been more happy if ſhe had not been in ſome ſenſe conſtrained to alter the ſimplicity of her faith, and make it more curious and articulate, ſo much that he had need be a ſubtle Man to underſtand the very words of the new determinations.

For the firſt *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, Numb. 26. in the preſence of his Clergy, entreats ſome- what more curiouſly of the ſecret of the myſterious Trinity and Unity, ſo curiouſly, that *A-* Socra. Lib 1. c. 8. *rius* (who was a Sophiſter too ſubtle as it afterwards appear'd) miſunderſtood him, and thought he intended to bring in the hereſy of *Sabellius*. For while he taught the Unity of the Trinity, either he did it ſo inartificially, or ſo intricately, that *Arius* thought he did not diſtinguiſh the perſons, when the Biſhop intended only the unity of nature. Againſt this *A-* rius furioſly drives, and to confute *Sabellius*, in him (as he thought) the Biſhop, diſtinguiſhes the natures too, and ſo to ſecure the Article

Lib. I. c. 6.

Cap. 7.

Article of the Trinity, deſtroys the Unity. It was the firſt time the Queſtion was diſputed in the World, and in ſuch myſterious niceties, poſſibly every wiſe Man may underſtand ſomething, but few can underſtand all, and therefore ſuſpect what they underſtand not, and are furioſly zealous for that part of it which they do perceive. Well, it happened in theſe as always in ſuch caſes, in things men underſtand not they are moſt impetuous; and becauſe ſuſpicion is a thing infinite in degrees, for it hath nothing to determine it, a ſuſpicious perſon is ever moſt violent; for his fears are worſe than the thing feared, becauſe the thing is limited, but his fears are not; ſo that upon this grew contentions on both ſides, and tumults, rayling and reviling each other; and then the Laity were drawn into parts, and the *Meletians* abetted the wrong part, and the right part fearing to be overborn, did any thing that was next at hand to ſecure it ſelf. Now then they that lived in that Age, that underſtood the Men, that ſaw how quiet the Church was before this ſtir, how miſerably rent now, what little benefit from the Queſtion, what ſchiſm about it, gave other cenſures of the buſineſs, than we ſince have done, who only look upon the Article determin'd with truth and approbation of the Church generally, ſince that time. But the Epistle of *Constantine* to *Alexander* and *Arimus*, tells the truth, and chides them both for commencing the Queſtion, *Alexander* for broaching it, *Arimus* for taking it up; and although this be true, that it had been better for the Church it never had begun, yet being begun, what is to be done in it? of this alſo in that admirable Epistle, we have the Emperours judgement

(I ſup-

(I ſuppoſe not without the adviſe and privy of *Hefius* Biſhop of *Corduba*, whom the Emperour lov'd and truſted much, and imployed in the delivery of the Letters.) " For firſt he calls
" it a certain vain piece of a Queſtion, ill begun
" and more unadviſedly publiſhed, a Queſtion
" which no Law or Eccleſiaſtical Canon deſi-
" neth, a fruitleſs contention, the produët of
" idle brains, a matter ſo nice, ſo obſcure, ſo
" intricate that it was neither to be explicated
" by the Clergy, nor underſtood by the People,
" a diſpute of words, a doctrine inexplicable, but
" moſt dangerous when taught leaſt it introduce
" diſcord or blaſphemy; and therefore, the Ob-
" jector was raſh, and the Answerer unadviſed;
" for it concerned not the ſubſtance of Faith, or
" the worſhip of God, nor any chief Command-
" ment of Scripture, and therefore, why ſhould
" it be the matter of diſcord? For though the
" matter be grave; yet becauſe neither neceſſa-
" ry, nor explicable, the contention is trifling
" and toyiſh. And therefore, as the Philoſophers
" of the ſame Sect, though differing in explica-
" tion of an opinion, yet more love for the uni-
" ty of their profeſſion, than diſagree for the
" difference of Opinion; So ſhould Chriſtians
" believing in the ſame God, retaining the ſame
" Faith, having the ſame hopes oppoſed by the
" ſame Enemies, not fall at variance upon ſuch diſ-
" putes, conſidering our underſtandings are not
" all alike; and therefore, neither can our opi-
" nions in ſuch myſterious Articles; ſo the mat-
" ter being of no great importance, but vain,
" and a toy in reſpect of the excellent bleſſings
" of Peace and Charity, it were good that *Alex-
" ander* and *Arius* ſhould leave contending, keep
" their opinions to themſelves, ask each other
" forgive-

“forgiveness, and give mutual toleration. This is the substance of *Constantine’s* Letter, and it contains in it much reason, if he did not undervalue the Question; but it seems it was not then thought a Question of Faith, but of nicety of dispute; they both did believe one God, and the Holy Trinity. Now then that he afterward called the *Nicene* Council, it was upon occasion of the vileness of the men of the *Arian* party, their eternal discord and pertinacious wrangling, and to bring peace into the Church; that was the necessity; and in order to it was the determination of the Article. But for the Article it self, the Letter declares what opinion he had of that, and this Letter was by *Socrates* called a *wonderful exhortation, full of grace and sober counsels*; and such as *Hosius* himself, who was the messenger, pressed with all earnestness, with all the Skill and Authority he had.

Numb. 27. I know the opinion the World had of the Article afterward is quite differing from this censure given of it before; and therefore they have put it into the Creed (I suppose) to bring the World to unity, and to prevent Sedition in this Question, and the accidental Blasphemies which were occasioned by their curious talkings of such secret mysteries, and by their illiterate resolutions. But although the Article was determin’d with an excellent spirit, and we all with much reason profess to believe it; yet it is another consideration, whether or no it might not have been better determin’d, if with more simplicity; and another yet, whether or no since many of the Bishops who did believe this thing, yet did not like the nicety and curiosity of expressing it, it had not been more agreeable to the practise of the Apostles to have made a deter-

deter-

determination of the Article by way of Exposition of the Apostles Creed, and to have left this in a rescript, for record to all posterity, and not to have enlarged the Creed with it; for since it was an Explication of an Article of the Creed of the Apostles, as Sermons are of places of Scripture, it was thought by some, that Scripture might with good profit, and great truth be expounded, and yet the expositions not put into the Canon, or go for Scripture, but that left still in the naked Original simplicity, and so much the rather since that explication was further from the foundation, and though most certainly true, yet not penn'd by so infallible a Spirit, as was that of the Apostles; and therefore not with so much evidence, as certainty. And if they had pleased, they might have made use of an admirable precedent to this and many other great and good purposes, no less than of the blessed Apostles, whose Symbol they might have imitated, with as much simplicity as they did the Expressions of Scripture, when they first composed it. For it is most considerable, that although in reason, every clause in the Creed should be clear, and so inopportune and unapt to variety of interpretation, that there might be no place left for several senses or variety of Expositions: yet when they thought fit to insert some mysteries into the Creed, which in Scripture were expressed in so mysterious Words, that the last and most explicate sense would still be latent, yet they who (if ever any did) understood all the senses and secrets of it, thought it not fit to use any words but the words of Scripture, particularly in the Articles of [Christs descending into Hell, and sitting at the right hand of God] to shew us, that those
Creeds

Creeds are beſt which keep the very words of Scripture; and that Faith is beſt which hath greateſt ſimplicity, and that it is better in all caſes humbly to ſubmit, than curiouſly to enquire and pry into the myſtery under the cloud, and to hazard our Faith by improving our knowledge: If the *Nicene* Fathers had done ſo too, poſſibly the Church would never have repented it.

Numb. 28. And indeed the experience, the Church had afterwards, ſhewed that the Biſhops and Prieſts were not ſatisfied in all circumſtances, nor the ſchiſm appeaſed nor the perſons agreed, nor the Canons accepted, nor the Article underſtood, nor any thing right, but when they were overborn with Authority, which Authority when the ſcales turned, did the ſame ſervice and promotion to the contrary.

Numb. 29. But it is conſiderable, that it was not the Article or the thing it ſelf that troubled the diſagreeing perſons, but the manner of repreſenting it. For the five Diſſenters, *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, *Theognis*, *Maris*, *Theonas*, and *Secundus*, believed Chriſt to be very God of very God, but the claufe of *ὁμοούσιον* they derided as being perſuaded by their Logick, that he was neither of the ſubſtance of the Father, by diviſion as a piece of a lump, nor derivation as Children from their Parents, nor by production as buds from Trees, and no body could tell them any other way at that time, and that made the fire to burn ſtill. And that was it I ſaid; if the Article had been with more ſimplicity, and leſs nicety determin'd, Charity would have gain'd more, and Faith would have loſt nothing. And we ſhall find the wiſeſt of them all, for ſo *Eusebius Pamphilus* was eſteem'd, published a Creed

a Creed or Confession in the Synod, and though he and all the rest believed that great mystery of Godlineſs, *God manifested in the flesh*, Vide Sozomen. lib. 2. c. 18. yet he was not fully satisfied, nor so soon of the clause of *one substance*, till he had done a little violence to his own understanding; for even when he had subscribed to the clause of *one substance*, he does it with a protestation, that *heretofore he never had been acquainted, nor accustomed himself to such speeches*. And the sense of the word was either so ambiguous, or their meaning so uncertain that *Andreas Fricius* does with some probability dispute that the *Nicene Fathers* by *ὁμοούσιον*, did mean *Patris similitudinem, non essentiae unitatem*, *Sylva* 4. c. 1. And it was so well understood by persons disinterested, that when *Arius* and *Euzoius* had confessed Christ to be *Deus verbum*, without inserting the clause of *one substance*, the Emperor by his Letter approved of his Faith, and restored him to his Country and Office, and the Communion of the Church. And a long time after although the Article was believed with * nicety enough, yet when they added more words still to the mystery, and brought in the word *ὕποστασις*, saying there were three hypostases in the holy Trinity; it was so long before it could be understood, that it was believed therefore, because they would not oppose their Superiors, or disturb the peace of the Church, in things which they thought could not be understood: insomuch that *St. Hierom* writ to *Damascus*, in these words: *Discerne si placet obsecro, non timebo tres hypostases dicere si jubetis*; and again, *Obtestor beatitudinem tuam per Crucifixum, mundi salutem, per ὁμοούσιον Trinitatem, ut mihi Epistolis tuis, sive*

Socrat. lib. 1. cap. 26.

** Non inaproprie dixerit dixit, qui curiosa explicationi hujus mysterii dictum Aristonis Philosophi applicuit. Holleborus niger si crassius sumatur purgat & sanat. Quum autem teritur & comminuitur, suffocat.*

racendarum ſive dicendarum hypoftaſeôn detur auctoritas.

Numb. 30. But without all Queſtion, the Fathers determin'd the Queſtion with much truth, though I cannot ſay, the Arguments upon which they built their Decrees, were ſo good as the con- cluſion it ſelf was certain; But that which in this caſe is conſiderable, is whether or no they did well in putting a curſe to the foot of their Decree, and the Decree it ſelf into the Symbol, as if it had been of the ſame neceſſity. For the curſe, *Eufebius Pamphilus* could hardly find in his heart to ſubſcribe, at laſt he did but with this claufe that he ſubſcribed it be- cauſe the form of curſe did only forbid men to acquaint themſelves with foreign ſpeeches and unwritten languages, whereby confuſion and diſcord is brought into the Church. So that it was not ſo much a magiſterial high aſſertion of the Article, as an endeavour to ſecure the peace of the Church. And to the ſame purpoſe for ought I know, the Fathers compoſed a Form of Confession, not as a preſcript Rule of Faith to build the hopes of our ſalvation on, but as a *teſſera* of that Communion which by public Authority was therefore eſtabliſhed upon thoſe Articles becauſe the Articles were true though not of prime neceſſity, and becauſe the unity of confeſſion was judged, as things they ſtood, the beſt preſerver of the unity of minds.

Numb. 31. But I ſhall obſerve this, that although the *Nicene* Fathers in that caſe at that time, and in that conjuncture of circumſtances did we (and yet their approbation is made by after Ages *ex poſt facto*;) yet if this precedent had been followed by all Councils (and certainly they

had equal power, if they had thought it equally reasonable) and that they had put all their Decrees into the Creed, as ſome have done ſince, to what a volume had the Creed by this time ſwell'd? and all the houſe had run into foundation, nothing left for ſuper-ſtructures. But that they did not, it appears, 1. that ſince they thought all their Decrees true, yet they did not think them all neceſſary, at leaſt not in that degree, and that they publiſhed ſuch Decrees, they did it *declarando*, not *imperando*, as Doctors in their Chairs, not maſters of other men's faith and conſciences. 2. And yet there ſome more modeſty, or warineſs or neceſſity (what ſhall I call it?) than this comes to: why are not all controverſies determined? even when General Aſſemblies of Presbyteries have been, ſome controverſies that have been very vexatious, have been pretermitted, and others of leſs conſequence have been determined: Why did never any General Council condemn in expreſs ſentence the *Pelagian* heresy, that great peſt, that ſubtle infection of Chriſtendom? and yet divers General Councils did aſſemble while the heresy was in the world. Both theſe caſes in ſeveral degrees give men in their liberty of believing and propheſying. The latter proclaims that all controverſies cannot be determin'd to ſufficient purpoſe, and the firſt declares that thoſe that are, are not all of them matters of Faith, and themſelves are not ſo ſecure, but they may be deceived; and therefore poſſibly it were better they were let alone; for if the latter leaves them divided in their opinions, yet their Communities, and therefore probably their charitiés are not divided; but the former divides their

1.

2.

Communion, and hinders their intereſt: and yet for ought is certain, the accuſed perſon is the better Catholick. And yet after all this, it is not ſafety enough to ſay, let the Council or Prelates determine Articles warily, freedom, with great caution, and with much ſweetneſs and modeſty: For though this be better than to do it raſhly, frequently and furiously yet if we once tranſgreſs the bounds ſet us by the Apoſtles in their Creed, and not only preach other truths, but determine them *pro tribunali* as well as *pro cathedra*, although there be no error in the ſubject-matter (as in *Nice* there was none) yet if the next Age ſay they will determine another Article with as much care and caution, and pretend a great neceſſity, there is no hindring them but by giving reaſons againſt it; and ſo like enough they might have done againſt the decreeing the Article at *Nice*; yet that is not ſufficient; for ſince the Authority of the *Nice* Council hath grown to the height of a mountainous prejudice againſt him that ſhould ſay it was ill done, the ſame reaſon and the ſame neceſſity may be pretended by any Age and in any Council, and they think themſelves warranted by the great precedent at *Nice* to proceed as peremptorily as they did; then if any other Aſſembly of learned men might poſſibly be deceived, were it not better that they ſhould ſpare the labour, than that they ſhould with ſo great pomp and ſolemnities engage mens perſuaſions, and determine an Article which after Ages muſt reſcind; for there is moſt certainly in their own Age, the power with ſafety of Faith and ſalvation, might have been diſputed and diſbelieved: And that muſt

mens faiths have been tyed up by Acts and Decrees of Councils for thoſe Articles in which the next Age did ſee a liberty had better been preſerved, becauſe an error was determined, we ſhall afterward receive a more certain account.

And therefore the Council of *Nice* did well, *Numb. 32.* and *Conſtantinople* did well, ſo did *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; but it is becauſe the Articles were truly determined (for that is part of any belief;) but who is ſure it ſhould be ſo beforehand, and whether the points there determined were neceſſary or no to be believed or to be determin'd, if peace had been concern'd in it through the faction and diviſion of the parties, I ſuppoſe the judgment of *Conſtantine* the Emperour and the famous *Hofius* of *Corduba* ſufficient to inſtruct us, whoſe authority I rather urge than reaſons, becauſe it is a prejudice and not a reaſon I am to contend againſt.

So that ſuch determinations and publiſhing *Numb 33.* of Confessions with Authority of Prince and Biſhop, are ſometimes of very good uſe for the peace of the Church, and they are good alſo to determine the judgment of indifferent perſons, whoſe reaſons of either ſide, are not too great to weigh down the probability of that authority: But for perſons of confident and ſuperior underſtandings, they on whoſe ſide the determination is, are armed with a prejudice againſt the other, and with a weapon to affront them, but with no more to convince them; and they againſt whom the deciſion is, do the more readily betake themſelves to the defensive, and are engaged upon conteſtation and publick enmities, for ſuch Articles which either might ſafely have been unknown, or with

F 3

much

much charity diſputed. Therefore the *Nice* Council, although it have the advantage of aquir'd and preſcribing Authority, yet it may not become a precedent to others, leaſt the inconveniences of multiplying more Articles upon as great pretence of reaſon as they make the act of the *Nicene* Fathers in ſtraitning Propheſying and enlarging the Creed, become accidentally an inconvenience. The firſt ſtraint, although if it had been complain'd of might poſſibly have been better conſider'd of, yet the inconvenience is not viſible, till it comes by way of precedent to uſher in more. It is like an Arbitrary power, which although by the ſame reaſon it take ſix pence from the ſubject it may take a hundred pound, and then a thouſand, and then all, yet ſo long as it is within the firſt bounds, the inconvenience is not great; but when it comes to be a precedent argument for more, then the firſt may juſtly complain'd of, as having in it that reaſon in the principle which brought the inconvenience in the ſequel; and we have ſeen very ill conſequents from innocent beginnings.

Numb. 34.

And the inconveniences which might poſſibly ariſe from this precedent, thoſe wiſe Perſonages alſo did fore-ſee: and therefore although they took liberty in *Nice*, to add ſome Articles, or at leaſt more explicitly to declare the firſt Creed, yet they then would have the world to reſt upon that and go no farther as believing that to be ſufficient. St. *Arhanas*

Epist. ad Epist.

declares their opinion, ἡ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ παρὰ παλαιοῦν καὶ τὰς θείας γραφὰς, ὁμολογηθεῖσα πάλαι ἀνάρχης ἐστὶν τοῦ ἀνατρεπωμένου μὲν πάσης ἀσθενοῦς ὅτι ἡ ἀσθενεία ἐν Χριστῷ πίστεως.

Faith which thoſe Fathers there confeſſed was ſufficient

sufficient for the refutation of all impiety, and the establishment of all Faith in Christ and true Religion. And therefore there was a famous Epistle written by *Zeno* the Emperour, ^{Evag. l. 3. c} called the 'Ενωτικὸν or the Epistle of reconciliation, ^{14.} in which all disagreeing interests, are entreated to agree in the *Nicene* Symbol, and a promise made upon that condition to communicate with all other Sects, adding withall, that the Church should never receive any other Symbol than that which was composed by the *Nicene* Fathers. And however *Honorius* was condemn'd for a *Monothelite*; yet in one of the Epistles which the sixth Synod alledged against him, (*viz.* the second) he gave them counsel that would have done the Church as much service as the determination of the Article did; for he advised them not to be curious in their disputings, nor dogmatical in their determinations about that Question; and because the Church was not used to dispute in that Question, it were better to preserve the simplicity of Faith, than to ensnare mens consciences by a new Article. And when the Emperour *Constantius* was by his Faction engaged in a contrary practice, the inconvenience and unreasonableness was so great, that a prudent Heathen observed and noted it in this character of *Constantius*, *Christianam religionem absolutam & simplicem [N.B.] anili superstitione confudit. In quâ scrutandâ perplexius quam in componendâ gratiâ, excitavit dissidia quæ progressa fusiùs aluit concertatione verborum dum ritum omnem ad summa trahere conatur arbitrium.*

And yet men are more lead by Example ^{Numb. 87} than either by Reason or by Precept; for in the Council of *Constantinople* one Article *de novo &*

integro was added, viz. *I believe one Baptiſm for the remiſſion of ſins*; and then again they were ſo confident, that that Confession of Faith was ſo abſolutely intire, and that no man ever after ſhould need to add any thing to the integrity of Faith, that the Fathers of the Council of *Ephesus* pronounced *Anathema* to all thoſe that ſhould add any thing to the Creed of *Constantinople*. And yet for all this, the Church of *Rome* in a Synod at *Gentilly* added the claufe of *Filioque*, to the Article of the proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt, and what they have done ſince, all the world knows, *Exempla non conſiſtunt, ſed quamvis in tenuem recepta tramitem, latiffimè evagandi ſibi faciunt poteſtatem*. All men were perſuaded that it was moſt reaſonable the limits of Faith ſhould be no more enlarged; but yet they enlarged it themſelves, and bound others from doing it, like an intemperate Father, who becauſe he knows he does ill himſelf, enjoyns temperance to his Son, but continues to be intemperate himſelf.

Numb. 36. But now if I ſhould be queſtioned concerning the Symbol of *Athanaſius* (for we ſee the *Nicene* Symbol was the Father of many more, ſome twelve or thirteen Symbols in the ſpace of a hundred years) I confeſs I cannot ſee that moderate ſentence and gentleneſs of charity in his Preface and Concluſion as there was in the *Nicene* Creed. Nothing there but damnation and periſhing everlaſtingly, unleſs the Article of the Trinity be believed, as it is there with curioſity and minute particularities explain'd. Indeed *Athanaſius* had been ſoundly vexed on one ſide, and much cryed up on the other; and therefore it is not ſo much wonder for him to be ſo decretory and ſevere in his cenſure; for
nothing

nothing could more aſcertain his friends to him, and diſ-repute his enemies, than the belief of that damnatory Appendix; but that does not juſtifie the thing. For the Articles themſelves, I am moſt heartily perſuaded of the truth of them, and yet I dare not ſay all that are not ſo, are irrevocably damn'd, becauſe *citra hoc Symbolum*, the Faith of the Apoſtles Creed is intire, and he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, that is, he that believeth ſuch a belief as is ſufficient diſpoſition to be baptized, that Faith with the Sacrament is ſufficient for heaven. Now the Apoſtles Creed does one; why therefore do not both intitle us to the promiſe? Beſides, if it were conſidered concerning *Athanaſius's* Creed, how many people underſtand it not, how contrary to natural reaſon it ſeems, how little the * Scripture ſays of thoſe curioſities of Explication, and how Tradition was not clear on his ſide for the Article it ſelf, much leſs for thoſe forms and minutes (how himſelf is put to make an answer, and excuſe for the

• Vide Heſium de author. S. Serip. l. 3. p. 53. & Gordon. Huntlaum. Tom. 1. contr. l. de verbo Dei, cap. 19.

† Fathers ſpeaking in favour of the *Arrians*, at leaſt ſo ſeemingly, that the *Arrians* appeal'd to them for tryal, and the offer was declin'd) and after all this that the *Nicene* Creed it ſelf went not ſo far, neither in Article, nor Anathema nor Explication, it had not been amiſs if the final judgment had been

left to Jeſus Chriſt; for he is appointed Judge of all the World, and he ſhall Judge the people righteouſly, for he knows every truth, the degree of every neceſſity, and all excuſes that do leſſen, or take away the nature

or

† *Vide Gretſer. & Tanner. in colloq. Ratisbon. Eusebium fuiſſe Arianum ait Perron. lib. 3. cap. 2. contra le Roy Jaques. Idem. ait Originem negaſſe Divinitatem filii. & Spir. S. l. 2. c. 7. de Euchar. contra Dupleſſis. idem cap. 5. obſerv. 4. ait Irenaeum talia dixiſſe qua qui hodie diceret, pro Arriano reputaretur. vide etiam Fiſher. in reſp. ad 9. Quaest. Jacobi Reg. & Epiſphan. in haeſ. 65.*

2 Pet. 2. 1.

D. Tho. 22^a.
7. 1. artic. 1. ad
3177.

or malice of a crime; all which I think *Athanaſius* though a very good man, did not know ſo well as to warrant ſuch a ſentence. And put caſe the hereſy there condemn'd be damnable, (as it is damnable enough) yet a man may maintain an opinion that is in it ſelf damnable, and yet he not knowing it ſo, and being invincibly lead into it may go to heaven; his opinion ſhall burn, and himſelf be ſaved. But however, I find no opinions in Scripture call'd damnable, but what are impious in *materia practica*, or directly deſtructive of the Faith or the body of Chriſtianity, ſuch of which *St. Peter* ſpeaks [*bringing in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, theſe are the falſe Prophets who out of covetouſneſs make merchandice of you through cozening words.*] Such as theſe are truly hereſies, and ſuch as theſe are certainly damnable. But becauſe there are no degrees either of truth or falſhood, every true propoſition being alike true; that an error is more or leſs damnable, is not told us in Scripture, but is determin'd by the man and his manners, by circumſtance and accidents; and therefore the cenſure in the Preface and end, are Arguments of his zeal and ſtrength of his perſuaſion; but they are extrinſecal and accidental to the Articles, and might as well have been ſpared. And indeed to me it ſeems very hard to put uncharitableneſs into the Creed, and ſo to make it become as an Article of Faith, though perhaps this very thing was no Faith of *Athanaſius* who if we may believe *Aquinas*, made this manifeſtation of Faith, *non per modum Symboli, ſed per modum doctrinae*, that is, if I underſtood him right, not with a purpoſe to impoſe it upon

upon others, but with confidence to declare his own belief; and that it was preſcrib'd to others as a Creed, was the act of the Biſhops of *Rome*; ſo he ſaid, nay, poſſibly it was none of his: So ſaid the Patriarch of C.P. *Meletius* about one hundred and thirty years ſince, in his Epistle to *John Douza*, *Athanaſio falſo adſcriptum Symbolum cum Pontificum Rom. appendice illâ adulteratum, luce lucidiùs conteſtamur*. And it is more than probable that he ſaid true, becauſe this Creed was written originally in Latin, which in all reaſon *Athanaſius* did not, and it was tranſlated into Greek, it being apparent that the Latin Copy is but one, but the Greek is various, there being three Editions or Tranſlations rather, expreſſed by *Genebrard*, lib. 3. de *Trinit*. But in this particular, who liſt, may better ſatiſfie himſelf in a diſputation de *Symbolo Athanaſii*, printed at *Wertzburg* 1590 ſuppoſed to be written by *Serrarius* or *Clencherus*.

And yet I muſt obſerve that this Symbol of *Numb. 37.* *Athanaſius*, and that other of *Nice*, offer not at any new Articles; they only pretend to a further Explication of the Articles Apoſtolicall, which is a certain confirmation that they did not believe more Articles to be of belief neceſſary to ſalvation: if they intended theſe further Explications to be as neceſſary as the dogmatical Articles of the Apoſtles Creed, I know not how to answer all that may be objected againſt that; but the advantage that I ſhall gather from their not proceeding to new matters, is laid out ready for me in the words of *Athanaſius*, ſaying of this Creed [*this is the Catholick Faith*] and if his authority be good, or his ſaying true, or he the Author, then no man can ſay of any other Article, that it is a part of the

*Bulla Pii
quarti ſupra
forma jura-
menti profeſſi-
onis fidei, in
ſin. Conc. Tri-
dent.*

the Catholick Faith, or that the Catholick Faith can be enlarged beyond the contents of that Symbol; and therefore it is a ſtrange boldneſs in the Church of *Rome*, firſt to add twelve new Articles, and then to add the Appendix of *Athanaſius* to the end of them, *This is the Catholick Faith, without which no man can be ſaved.*

Numb. 38. But ſo great an example of ſo excellent a man, hath been either miſtaken or followed with too much greedineſs, all the world in factions, all damning one another, each party damn'd by all the reſt, and there is no diſagreeing in opinion from any man that is in love with his own opinion, but damnation preſently to all that diſagree. A Ceremony and a Rite hath cauſed ſeveral Churches to Excommunicate each other, as in the matter of the Saturday Faſt, and keeping Eaſter. But what the ſpirits of men are when they are exaſperated in a Queſtion and difference of Religion, as they call it, though the thing it ſelf may be moſt inconfiderable, is very evident in that requeſt of Pope *Innocent* the Third, deſiring of the Greeks (but reaſonably a man would think) that they would not ſo much hate the Roman manner of conſecrating in unleavened bread, as to waſh and ſcrape, and pare the Altars after a Roman Prieſt had conſecrated. Nothing more furious than a miſtaken zeal, and the actions of a ſcrupulous and abuſed conſcience. When men think every thing to be their Faith and their Religion, commonly they are ſo buſie in trifles and ſuch impertinencies in which the ſcene of their miſtake lies, that they neglect the greater things of the Law, charity, and compliances, and the gentleneſs of Chriſtian Communion; for this is the

the great principle of mischief, and yet is not more pernicious than unreasonable.

For I demand: Can any man say and justify *Numb. 39.* that the Apostles did deny Communion to any man that believed the Apostles Creed, and liv'd a good life? And dare any man tax that proceeding of remissness, and indifferency in Religion; And since our blessed Saviour promised Salvation to him that *believeth* (and the Apostles when they gave this word the greatest extent, enlarged it not beyond the borders of the Creed) how can any man warrant the condemning of any man to the flames of Hell that is ready to die in attestation of this Faith, so expounded and made explicite by the Apostles, and lives accordingly? And to this purpose it was excellently said by a wise and a pious Prelate, St. Hilary, *Non per difficiles nos Deus ad beatam vitam questiones vocat, &c. In absoluto nobis & facili est eternitas; Jesum suscitatum à mortuis, per deum credere, & ipsum esse Dominum confiteri, &c.* These are the Articles which we must believe, which are the sufficient and adequate object of that Faith which is required of us in order to Salvation. And therefore it was, that when the Bishops of Istria deserted the Communion of Pope Pelagius, in *causâ trium Capitulorum*, he gives them an account of his Faith by recitation of the Creed, and by attesting the four General Councils, and is confident upon this that *de fidei firmitate nulla poterit esse questio vel suspicio generari*; let the Apostles Creed, especially so explicated, be but secured, and all Faith is secured; and yet that explication too, was less necessary than the Articles themselves; for the explication was but accidental, but the Articles even before the

*L. 10. de Trin.
ad finem.*

*Concil. tom. 4.
Edit. Paris. p.
473.*

the Explication were accounted a ſufficient inlet to the Kingdom of heaven.

Numb. 40. And that there was ſecurity enough in the ſimple believing the firſt Articles, is very certain amongſt them, and by their Principles who allow of an implicate faith to ſerve moſt perſons to the greateſt purpoſes; for if the Creed did contain in it the whole Faith, and that other Articles were in it implicitly, (for ſuch is the doctrine of the School, and particularly of *Aquinas*) then he that explicitly believes all the Creed, does implicitly believe all the Articles contain'd in it, and then it is better the implication ſhould ſtill continue, than that by any explication (which is ſimply unneceſſary) the Church ſhould be troubled with queſtions, and uncertain determinations, and factions enkindled, and animoſities ſet on foot, and mens ſouls endanger'd, who before were ſecur'd by the explicate belief of all that the Apoſtles requir'd as neceſſary, which belief alſo did ſecure them for all the reſt, becauſe it implied the belief of whatſoever was virtually in the firſt Articles, if ſuch belief ſhould by chance be neceſſary.

Numb. 41. The ſumm of this diſcourſe is this, if we take an eſtimate of the nature of Faith from the dictates and promiſes Evangelical, and from the practice Apoſtolical, the nature of Faith and its integrity conſiſts in ſuch propoſitions which make the foundation of hope and charity, that which is ſufficient to make us to do honour to Chriſt and to obey him, and to encourage us in both; and this is compleated in the Apoſtles Creed. And ſince contraries are of the ſame extent, hereſy is to be judg'd by its proportion and analogy to faith, and that is hereſy only which is againſt Faith. Now becauſe Faith is not

not only a precept of Doctrines, but of manners and holy life, whatſoever is either oppoſite to an Article of Creed, or teaches ill life, that's hereſy ; but all thoſe propoſitions which are extrinſecal to theſe two conſiderations, be they true or be they falſe, make not hereſy, nor the man an Heretick ; and therefore however he may be an erring perſon, yet he is to be uſed accordingly, pitied and inſtructed, not condemned or Excommunicated ; And this is the reſult of the firſt ground, the conſideration of the nature of Faith and Hereſy.

S E C T. III.

Of the difficulty and uncertainty of Arguments from Scripture, in Questions not ſimply neceſſary, not literally determined.

GOD who diſpoſes of all things ſweetly and Numb. i.
according to the nature and capacity of things and perſons, had made thoſe only neceſſary, which he had taken care ſhould be ſufficiently propounded to all perſons of whom he required the explicate belief. And therefore all the Articles of Faith are clearly and plainly ſet down in Scripture, and the Goſpel is not hid Orthod. fidei. lib. 4. c. 18.
nifi pereuntibus faith St. Paul ; *πάσης γὰρ ἀρετῆς παράκλησιν, καὶ χάριτας ἀπάσης τροπῇ ἐν ταύταις εὐείσκομεν.*
faith *Damaſcen*, and that ſo manifeſtly that no man can be ignorant of the foundation of Faith without his own apparent fault. And this is acknowledged by all wiſe and good men, and is evident, beſides the reaſonableneſs of the

the thing, in the testimonies of SS. * *Auſtin*,
 88. & de util. cred. c. 6. † *Hierom*, || *Chryſoſtom*, † *Fulgentius*, * *Hugo de*
 † *Super Iſa.* *Sancto Viſlore*, || *Theodoret*, * *Lactantius*, † *The-*
 c. 19. & in *ophilius Antiochenus*, || *Aquinas*, and the latter
Pſal. 86. School-men. And God hath done more; for
 || *Homil.* 3. in many things which are only profitable, are
Theſſ. Ep. 2. also ſet down ſo plainly, that (as St. *Auſtin* ſays)
 † *Serm.* de *nemo inde haurire non poſſit, ſi modò ad hauriendum*
confell. *devotè ac piè accedat (ubi ſupra de util. cred. c. 6.)*
 * *Miſcel.* 2. l. 1. but of ſuch things there is no Queſtion commenc'd
 tit. 46. in Chriſtendom, and if there were, it cannot but
 || *In Gen.* ap- be a crime and humane intereſt, that are the Au-
Struch. p. 87. thors of ſuch diſputes, and therefore theſe can-
 * C. 6. not be ſimple errors, but always hereſies, be-
 † *Ad Anti-* cauſe the principle of them is a perſonal ſin.
oc h. l. 2. p. 918.
 || *Par.* I. q. 1.
 art. 9.

Numb. 2. But beſides theſe things which are ſo plainly
 ſet down, ſome for doctrine as St. *Paul* ſays,
 that is, for Articles and foundation of Faith,
 ſome for inſtruction, ſome for reproof, ſome
 for comfort, that is, in matters practical and
 ſpeculative of ſeveral tempers and conſtitutions,
 there are innumerable places containing in them
 great myſteries, but yet either ſo enwrapped
 with a cloud, or ſo darkned with umbrages, or
 heighthened with expreſſions, or ſo covered
 with allegories and garments of Rhetorick, ſo
 profound in the matter, or ſo altered or made
 intricate in the manner, in the cloathing and in
 the dreſſing, that God may ſeem to have left
 them as tryals of our induſtry, and Arguments
 of our imperfections, and incentives to the
 longings after heaven, and the cleareſt revela-
 tions of eternity, and as occasions and opportu-
 nities of our mutual charity and toleration to
 each other, and humility in our ſelves, rather
 than the repositories of Faith and furniture of
 Creeds, and Articles of belief.

For where-ever the word of God is kept, whe- *Numb. 3.*
ther in Scripture alone, or alſo in Tradition, he
that conſiders that the meaning of the one, and
the truth or certainty of the other are things of
great Queſtion, will ſee a neceſſity in theſe things
(which are the ſubject matter of moſt of the
Queſtions of Chriſtendom) that men ſhould hope
to be excuſed by an implicate faith in God Al-
mighty. For when there are in the Explications
of Scripture ſo many Commentaries, ſo many
Senſes and Interpretations, ſo many Volumes in
all Ages, and all, like Mens Faces, exactly none
like another, either this difference and inconve-
nience is abſolutely no fault at all, or if it be, it is
excusable, by a mind prepared to conſent in that
truth which God intended. And this I call an im-
plicate Faith in God, which is certainly of as great
excellency as an implicate Faith in any Man or
company of Men. Becauſe they who do require
an implicate Faith in the Church for Articles leſs
neceſſary, and excuſe the want of explicate Faith
by the implicate, do require an implicate Faith
in the Church, becauſe they believe that God
hath required of them to have a mind prepared
to believe whatever the Church ſays; which be-
cauſe it is a propoſition of no abſolute certainty,
whoſoever does in readineſs of mind believe all
that God ſpake, does alſo believe that ſufficient-
ly, if it be fitting to be believ'd, that is, if it be
true, and if God hath ſaid ſo; for he hath the
ſame obedience of underſtanding in this as in the
other. But becauſe it is not ſo certain God hath
ordain'd him in all things to believe that which is
called the Church, and that it is certain we muſt
believe God in all things, and yet neither know
all that either God hath revealed or the Church
taught, it is better to take the certain than the un-
certain,

certain, to believe God rather than Men, eſpecially ſince if God hath bound us to believe Men, our abſolute ſubmiſſion to God does involve that, and there is no inconvenience in the World this way, but that we implicitly believe one Article more, *viz.* the Church's Authority or infallibility, which may well be pardoned, becauſe it ſecures our belief of all the reſt, and we are ſure if we believe all that God ſaid explicitly or implicitly, we alſo believe the Church implicitly in caſe we are bound to it; but we are not certain that if we believe any company of Men whom we call the Church, that we therefore obey God and believe what he hath ſaid. But however, if this will not help us, there is no help for us, but good fortune or abſolute predeſtination; for by choice and indoltry, no man can ſecure himſelf that in all the myſteries of Religion taught in Scripture he ſhall certainly underſtand and explicitly believe that ſenſe, that God intended. For to this purpoſe there are many conſiderations.

Numb. 4. 1. There are ſo many thouſands of Copies that were writ by Perſons of ſeveral intereſts and perſuaſions, ſuch different underſtandings and tempers, ſuch diſtinct abilities and weakneſſes, that it is no wonder there is ſo great variety of readings both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. In the Old Teſtament, the Jews pretend that the Chriſtians have corrupted many places, on purpoſe to make Symphony between both the Teſtaments. On the other ſide, the Chriſtians have had ſo much reaſon to ſuſpect the Jews, that when *Aquila* had tranſlated the Bible in their Schools, and had been taught by them, they rejected the Edition many of them, and ſome of them called it hereſy to follow it.

And

And *Justin Martyr* justified it to *Tryphon*, that the Jews had defalk'd many sayings from the Books of the old Prophets, and amongst the rest he instances in that of the Psalm, *Dicite in nationibus quia Dominus regnavit à ligno*. The last words they have cut off, and prevail'd so far in it, that to this day none of our Bibles have it; but if they ought not to have it, then *Justin Martyr's* Bible had more in it than it should have, for there it was; so that a fault there was either under or over. But however, there are infinite Readings in the New Testament (for in that I will instance) some whole Verses in one that are not in another, and there was in some Copies of *St. Mark's* Gospel in the last Chapter a whole Verse, a Chapter it was anciently called, that is not found in our Bibles, as *St. Hierom. ad Hedibiam*, q. 3. notes. The words he repeats, *Lib. 2. contra Polygamos. Et illi satis faciebant dicentes, seculum istud iniquitatis & incredulitatis substantia est, quæ non sinit per immundos spiritus veram Dei apprehendi virtutem, idcirco jam nunc revela justitiam tuam*. These words are thought by some, to favour of *Manichæisme*, and for ought I can find were therefore rejected out of many Greek Copies, and at last out of the Latin. Now suppose that a *Manichee* in disputation should urge this place, having found it in his Bible, if a Catholick should answer him by saying it is Apocryphal, and not found in divers Greek Copies, might not the *Manichee* ask how it came in, if it was not the word of God, and if it was, how came it out? and at last take the same liberty of rejecting any other Authority which shall be alledged against him; if he can find any Copy that may favour him, however that favour be procured; and did not the *Ebionites*

nites reject all the Epistles of St. Paul upon pretence he was an Enemy to the Law of Moses? indeed it was boldly and most unreasonable done; but if one title or one Chapter of S. Mark be called Apochryphal, for being suspected of *Manicheisme* it is a plea that will too much justify others in their taking and chusing what they list. But I will not urge it so far; but is not there as much reason for the fierce *Lutherans* to reject the Epistle of S. James for favouring justification by works, or the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, upon pretence that the sixth and tenth Chapters do favour *Novatianism*; especially since it was by some famous Churches at first not accepted, even by the Church of *Rome* her self; The Parable of the Woman taken in Adultery, which is now in *Joh. 8. Eusebius* says was not in any Gospel, but the Gospel *secundum Hebraeos*, and S. *Hierom* makes it doubtful, and so does S. *Chrysostom* and *Euthimius*, the first not vouchsafing to explicate it in Homilies upon S. *John*, the other affirming it not to be found in the exacter Copies. I shall not need to urge that there are some words so near in sound, that the Scribes might easily mistake: There is one famous one of *Κυρίω δαδόντες*, which yet some Copies read *καὶ τοῦ δαδόντες*, the sense is very unlike though the words be near, and there needs some little luxation to strain this latter reading to a good sense; That famous precept of S. Paul, that the Women must pray with a covering on their Head *ὡς τὸ ἄγγελος*, because of the Angels, hath brought into the Church an opinion that Angels are present in Churches, and are Spectators of our devotion and deportment. Such an opinion if it should meet with peevish opposites on one side, and confident Hyperaspists on the other, might possibly

poſſibly make a Sect, and here were a clear ground for the affirmative, and yet who knows but that it might have been a miſtake of the Tranſcribers to double the γ ? for if we read *διὰ τὰς ἀγέλας*, that the ſenſe be, Women in publick Aſſemblies muſt wear a Vail, by reaſon of Companies of the young Men there preſent, it would be no ill exchange for the loſs of a Letter, to make ſo probable ſo clear a Senſe of the place. But the inſtances in this kind, are too many, as appears in the variety of readings in ſeveral Copies proceeding from the negligence or ignorance of the Tranſcribers, or the malicious * endeavour of Hereticks, or the inserting Marginal Notes into the Text, or the nearneſs of ſeveral words. Indeed there is ſo much evidence of this particular, that it hath encouraged the ſervants of the Vulgar Tranſlation (for ſo ſome are now adays) to prefer that Tranſlation before the Original; for although they have attempted that propoſition with very ill ſucceſs, yet that they could think it poſſible to be prov'd, is an Argument there is much variety and alterations in divers Texts; for if they were not, it were impudence to pretend a Tranſlation, and that none of the beſt, ſhould be better than the Original. But ſo it is that this variety of reading is not of ſlight conſideration; for although it be demonſtrably true, that all things neceſſary to Faith and good manners are preſerv'd from alteration and corruption, becauſe they are of things neceſſary, and they could not be neceſſary, unleſs they were delivered to us, God in his goodneſs and his juſtice having oblig'd himſelf to preſerve that which he hath bound us to obſerve and keep; yet in other things which God hath not oblig'd

* *Græci corrumpunt novum Testamentum ut Testantur Tertul. l. 5. adv. Marcion. Euseb. l. 5. Hist. c. ult. Irenæ. l. 1. c. 29. allu. hæref. Baſil. l. 2. contr. Eunomium.*

himſelf ſo punctually to preſerve, in theſe things ſince variety of reading is crept in, every reading takes away a degree of certainty from any propoſition derivative from thoſe places ſo read. And if ſome Copies (eſpecially if they be publick and notable) omit a verſe or title, every Argument from ſuch a title or verſe loſes much of its ſtrength and reputation; and we find it in a great inſtance. For when in probation of the myſtery of the glorious Unity in Trinity, we alledge that ſaying of St. John [*there are three which bear witneſs in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and theſe three are one.*] the Antitrinitarians think they have answered the Argument by ſaying the Syrian Tranſlation, and divers Greek Copies have not that verſe in them, and therefore being of doubtful Authority, cannot conclude with certainty in a Queſtion of Faith. And there is an inſtance on the Catholick part. For when the Arians urge the ſaying of our Saviour, [*No man knows that day and hour (viz. of Judgment) no not the Son, but the Father only,*] to prove that the Son knows not all things, and therefore cannot be God in the proper ſenſe; St. Ambroſe thinks he hath answered the Argument by ſaying, thoſe words [*no not the Son*] was thruſt into the Text by the fraud of the Arians. So that here we have one objection, which muſt firſt be cleared and made intallible, before we can be aſcertain'd in any ſuch Queſtion as to call them Hereticks that diſſent.

Numb. 5. 2. I conſider that there are very many ſenſes and deſigns of expounding Scripture, and when the Grammatical ſenſe is found out, we are many times never the nearer; it is not that which was intended; for there is in very many Scriptures a double ſenſe, a literal and a Spiritual (for

(for the Scripture is a Book written within and without (*Apoc.* 5.) And both theſe ſenſes are ſubdivided. For the literal ſenſe is either natural or figurative: And the Spiritual is ſometimes allegorical, ſometimes anagogical, nay, ſometimes there are divers literal ſenſes in the ſame ſentence, as St. *Auſtin* excellently proves in divers * places, and it appears in divers quotations in the New Teſtament, where the Apoſtles and Divine Writers bring the ſame Teſtimony to divers purpoſes; and particularly, St. *Paul*'s making that ſaying of the Pſalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, to be an Argument of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and a designation or ordination to his Pontificate is an inſtance very famous in his 1. and 5. Chapter to the *Hebrews*. But now there being ſuch variety of ſenſes in Scripture, and but few places ſo mark'd out, as not to be capable of divers ſenſes, if men will write Commentaries, as *Herod* made Orations $\kappa\tau\iota\ \pi\omicron\iota\omicron\lambda\iota\varsigma\ \phi\alpha\upsilon\lambda\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$, what infallible $\kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ will be left whereby to judge of the certain dogmatical reſolute ſenſe of ſuch places which have been the matter of Queſtion? For put caſe a Queſtion were commenc'd concerning the degrees of glory in heaven, as there is in the Schools a noted one, To ſhew an inequality of reward, Chriſt's Parable is brought of the reward of ten Cities, and of five according to the divers improvement of the Talents; this ſenſe is myſtical, and yet very probable, and underſtood by men for ought I know, to this very ſenſe. And the reſult of the Argument is made good by St. *Paul*, as one ſtar differeth from another in glory; ſo ſhall it be in the reſurrection of the dead. Now ſuppoſe another ſhould take the ſame liberty of Expounding

* Lib. 12. con-
feſſ. cap. 26.
Lib. 11. de Ci-
vit. Dei. c. 9.
L. 3. de doctri-
na Chriſt. cap.
27.

another Parable to a myſtical ſenſe and Interpretation, as all Parables muſt be expounded; then the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and though differing in labour, yet having an equal reward, to any mans underſtanding may ſeem very ſtrongly to prove the contrary, and as if it were of purpoſe, and that it were *primum intentum* of the Parable, the Lord of the Vineyard determin'd the point reſolutely upon the mutiny and repining of them that had born the burthen and heat of the day, *I will give unto this laſt even as to thee*; which to my ſenſe ſeems to determine the Queſtion of degrees; They that work but little, and they that work long, ſhall not be diſtinguiſhed in the reward, though accidentally they were in the work; And if this opinion could but answer St. Paul's words, it ſtands as fair, and perhaps fairer than the other. Now if we look well upon the words of St. Paul, we ſhall find he ſpeaks nothing at all of diverſity of degrees of glory in beatified bodies, but the differences of glory in bodies heavenly and earthly, *There are* (ſays he) *bodies earthly, and there are heavenly bodies: And one is the glory of the earthly, another the glory of the heavenly; one glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, &c.* So ſhall it be in the Reſurrection; for it is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption. Plainly thus, our bodies in the Reſurrection ſhall differ, as much from our bodies here in the ſtate of corruption, as one Star does from another. And now ſuppoſe a Sect ſhould be commenc'd upon this Queſtion, (upon lighter and vainer many have been) either ſide muſt reſolve to answer the others Arguments, whether they can or no, and to deny to each other a liberty of expounding the parable to ſuch a ſenſe, and

and yet themselves must use it or want an Argument. But men use to be unjust in their own cases; And were it not better to leave each other to their liberty and seek to preserve their own charity? For when the words are capable of a mystical or a divers sense, I know not why mens fancies or understandings should be more bound to be like one another than their faces: And either in all such places of Scripture, a liberty must be indulg'd to every honest and peaceable wise man, or else all Argument from such places must be wholly declin'd. Now although I instanc'd in a Question, which by good fortune never came to open defiance, yet there have been Sects framed upon lighter grounds, more inconsiderable Questions, which have been disputed on either side with Arguments less material and less pertinent. St. *Austin* laugh'd at the *Donatists*, for bringing that saying of the Spouse in the *Canticles* to prove their Schism, *Indica mihi ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie*. For from thence they concluded the residence of the Church was only in the South part of the world, only in *Africa*. It was but a weak way of Argument; yet the Fathers were free enough to use such mediums, to prove mysteries of great concernment; but yet again, when they speak either against an Adversary, or with consideration, they deny that such mystical senses can sufficiently confirm a Question of Faith. But I shall instance in the great Question of Rebaptization of Hereticks, which many Saints, and Martyrs, and Confessors, and divers Councils, and almost all *Asia* and *Africa* did once believe and practise. Their grounds for the invalidity of the Baptism by a Heretick, were such mystical words as these, *Oleum peccatoris*

*Hieron. in
Matth. 13.*

peccatoris non impinguet caput meum, Pf. 140. And *Qui baptizatur à mortuo, quid proſicit lavatio ejus?* Eccluf. 34. And *ab aquâ alienâ abſtine*, Prov. 5. And *Deus peccatores non exaudit*, Joh. 9. And *he that is not with me is againſt me*, Luk. 11. I am not ſure the other part had Arguments ſo good. For the great one of *una fides, unum baptiſma*, did not conclude it to their underſtandings who were of the other opinion, and men famous in their generations; for it was no Argument that they who had been baptized by *John's* Baptiſm ſhould not be baptized in the name of Jeſus, becauſe *unus Deus, unum baptiſma*; and as it is ſtill one Faith which a man confeſſeth ſeveral times, and one Sacrament of the Eucharift, though a man often communicates; ſo it might be one Baptiſm though often miniſtred. And the unity of Baptiſm might not be deriv'd from the unity of the miniſtration, but from the unity of the Religion into which they are baptized; though baptized a thouſand times, yet becauſe it was ſtill in the name of the holy Trinity, ſtill into the death of Chriſt, it might be *unum baptiſma*. Whether St. Cyprian, Firmilian, and their Collegues had this diſcourſe or no (I know not) I am ſure they might have had much better to have evacuated the force of that Argument, although I believe they had the wrong cauſe in hand. But this is it that I ſay, that when a Queſtion is ſo undetermin'd in Scripture, that the Arguments rely only upon ſuch myſtical places whence the beſt fancies can draw the greateſt variety, and ſuch which perhaps were never intended by the holy Ghoſt, it were good the rivers did not ſwell higher than the fountain, and the confidence higher than the Argument
and

and evidence; for in this caſe there could not any thing be ſo certainly proved, as that the diſagreeing party ſhould deſerve to be condemn'd by a ſentence of Excommunication for diſbelieving it, and yet they were; which I wonder at ſo much the more, becauſe they (who as it was ſince judg'd) had the right cauſe, had not any ſufficient Argument from Scripture, not ſo much as ſuch myſtical Arguments, but did fly to the Tradition of the Church, in which alſo I ſhall afterward ſhew, they had nothing that was abſolutely certain.

3. I conſider that there are divers places of *Numb. 6.* Scripture containing in them myſteries and Queſtions of great concernment, and yet the fabrick and conſtitution is ſuch, that there is no certain mark to determine whether the ſenſe of them ſhould be literal or figurative; I ſpeak not here concerning extrinſecal means of determination, as traditive Interpretation, Councils, Fathers, Popes, and the like; I ſhall conſider them afterward in their ſeveral places; but here the ſubject-matter being concerning Scripture in its own capacity, I ſay there is nothing in the nature of the thing to determine the ſenſe and meaning, but it muſt be gotten out as it can; and that therefore it is unreaſonable, that what of it ſelf is ambiguous ſhould be underſtood in its own prime ſenſe and intention, under the pain of either a ſin or an Anathema; I inſtance in that famous place from whence hath ſprung that Queſtion of Tranſubſtanti-
Hoc eſt corpus meum. The words are plain and clear, apt to be underſtood in the literal ſenſe and yet this ſenſe is ſo hard as it does violence to reaſon, and therefore it is the Queſtion whether or no it be not a figurative ſpeech.

speech. But here what shall we have to determine it? What mean soever we take, and to what sense soever you will expound it, you shall be put to give an account why you expound other places of Scripture in the same case to quite contrary senses. For if you expound it literally, then besides that it seems to intrench upon the words of our blessed Saviour, *The words that I speak they are Spirit and they are life*, that is, to be spiritually understood (and it is a miserable thing to see what wretched shifts are used to reconcile the literal sense to these words, and yet to distinguish it from the Capernaïtical fancy) but besides this, why are not those other sayings of Christ expounded literally, *I am a Vine, I am the Door, I am a Rock*? Why do we flie to a figure in those parallel words? *This is the Covenant which I make between me and you*; and yet that Covenant was but the sign of the Covenant; and why do we fly to a figure in a precept, as well as in mystery and a proposition? *If thy right hand offend thee cut it off*; and yet we have figures enough to save a limb. If it be said because reason tells us these are not to be expounded according to the letter; This will be no plea for them who retain the literal exposition of the other instance against all reason, against all Philosophy, against all sense, and against two or three sciences. But if you expound these words figuratively, besides that you are to contest against a world of prejudices, you give your self the liberty, which if others will use when either they have a reason or a necessity so to do, they may perhaps turn all into Allegory, and so may evacuate any precept, and elude any Argument. Well, so it is that very wise men have expounded things

things * Allegorically, when they ſhould have expounded them literally. So did the famous Origen, who as St. Hierom reports of him, turned Paradise ſo into an Allegory, that he took away quite the truth of the Story, and not only Adam was turned out of the Garden, but the Garden it ſelf out of Paradise. Others expound things literally when they ſhould underſtand them in Allegory; ſo did the Ancient Papias underſtand (*Apocal. 20.*) Chriſts Millenary reign upon earth, and ſo, depreſſed the hopes of Chriſtianity and their deſires to the longing and expectation of temporal pleaſures and ſatiſfactions, and he was followed by Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Lactantius, and indeed the whole Church generally till St. Auſtin and St. Hierom's time who firſt of any whoſe works are extant did reprove the error. If ſuch great ſpirits be deceiv'd in finding out what kind of ſenſes be to be given to Scriptures, it may well be endur'd that we who ſit at their feet, may alſo tread in the ſteps of them whoſe feet could not always tread aright.

* Sic St. Hierom In adoleſcentiâ provocatus ardore & ſtudio Scripturarum allegorice interpretatus ſum Abdiâ Prophetam, cujus hiftoriam ne ſciebam. De ſenſu Allegorico S. Script. dixit Baſilius. *ὅς κακομαθήμων ἦν ἀπὸ διεξοδικῆς μελέτης, ἀληθινῶν δὲ εἰς πᾶν διαστρέφειν.* L. 22. de Civit. Dei, c. 7. præfat. l. 19. in Iſai. & in c. 36. Ezek.

4. I conſider that there are ſome places of Scripture that have the ſelf ſame expreſſions, the ſame preceptive words, the ſame reaſon and account in all appearance, and yet either muſt be expounded to quite different ſenſes, or elſe we muſt renounce the Communion, and the charities of a great part of Chriſtendom. And yet there is abſolutely nothing in the thing or in its circumſtances, or in its adjuncts that can determine it to different purpoſes. I inſtance in thoſe great excluſive negatives for the neceſſity of both Sacraments. *Niſi quis renatus fuerit aquâ, &c. Niſi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis, &c.* a non introibit in regnum cœlorum for

for both theſe. Now then the firſt is urg'd for the abſolute indiſpenſible neceſſity of Baptiſm even in Infants, inſomuch that Infants go to part of Hell if (inculpably both on their own and their Parents part) they miſs of Baptiſm, for that is the doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, which they learnt from St. *Auſtin*, and others alſo do from hence baptize Infants, though with a leſs opinion of its abſolute neceſſity. And yet the ſame manner of precept in the ſame form of words, in the ſame manner of threatening, by an excluſive negative, ſhall not enjoin us to communicate Infants, though damnation (at leaſt in form of words) be exactly and *per omnia* alike appendant to the neglect of holy Baptiſm and the venerable Eucharift. If [*nifi quis renatus*] ſhall conclude againſt the Anabaptiſt, for neceſſity of baptizing Infants (as ſure enough we ſay, it does) why ſhall not an equal [*nifi comederitis*] bring Infants to the holy Communion? The Primitive Church for ſome two whole Ages did follow their own principles, where-ever they lead them; and ſeeing that upon the ſame ground equal reſults muſt follow, they did Communicate Infants as ſoon as they had baptized them. And why the Church of *Rome* ſhould not do ſo too, being ſhe expounds [*nifi comederitis*] of oral manducation, I cannot yet learn a Reaſon. And for others that expound it of a ſpiritual manducation, why they ſhall not allow the diſagreeing part the ſame liberty of expounding [*nifi quis renatus*] too, I by no means can underſtand. And in theſe caſes no external determiner can be pretended in answer. For whatſoever is extrinſecal to the words, as Councils, Tradition, Church Authority, and Fathers, either have
ſaid

ſaid nothing at all, or have concluded by their practice contrary to the preſent opinion, as is plain in their communicating Infants by vertue of [*niſi comederitis.*]

5. I ſhall not need to urge the myſteriousneſs *Numb. 8.* of ſome points in Scripture, which *ex natura rei* are hard to be underſtood though very plainly repreſented. For there are ſome *ſecreta Theologia*, which are only to be underſtood by perſons very holy and ſpiritual, which are rather to be felt than diſcourſed of, and therefore if peradventure they be offered to publick conſideration, they will therefore be oppoſed becauſe they run the ſame fortune with many other Queſtions, that is, not to be underſtood, and ſo much the rather becauſe their underſtanding, that is, the feeling ſuch ſecrets of the Kingdom, are not the reſults of Logick and Philoſophy, or yet of publick revelation, but of the publick ſpirit privately working, and in no man is a duty, but in all that have it, is a reward, and is not neceſſary for all, but given to ſome, producing its operations, not regularly, but upon occaſions, perſonal neceſſities and new emergencies. Of this nature are the ſpirit of obſignation, belief of particular ſalvation, ſpecial influences and comforts coming from a ſenſe of the ſpirit of adoption, actual fervours and great complacencies in devotion, ſpiritual joys, which are little drawings aſide of the curtains of peace and eternity, and antepaſts of immortality. But the not underſtanding the perfect conſtitution and temper of theſe myſteries (and it is hard for any man ſo to underſtand, as to make others do ſo too that feel them not) is cauſe that in many Queſtions of ſecret Theology, by being very apt and eaſy to be miſtaken, there

there is a necessity in forbearing one another; and this consideration would have been of good use in the Question between *Soto* and *Catharinus*, both for the preservation of their charity and explication of the mystery.

Numb. 9.

6. But here it will not be unseasonable to consider, that all systems and principles of science are expressed so that either by reason of the Universality of the terms and subject-matter or the infinite variety of humane understandings, and these peradventure swayed by interest, or determin'd by things accidental and extrinsecal, they seem to divers men, nay to the same men upon divers occasions to speak things extremely disparate and sometimes contrary, but very often of great variety. And this very thing happens also in Scripture, that if it were not in *re sacra & seriâ*, it were excellent sport to observe how the same place of Scripture serves several turns upon occasion, and they at that time believe the words sound nothing else, whereas in the liberty of their judgment and abstracting from that occasion, their Commentaries understand them wholly to a differing sense. It is a wonder of what excellent use to the Church of *Rome*, is [*tibi dabo claves*:] It was spoken to *Peter* and none else (sometimes) and therefore it concerns him and his Successors only; the rest are to derive from him. And yet if you Question them for their Sacrament of Penance, and Priestly Absolution, then *tibi dabo claves* comes in, and that was spoken to *St. Peter*, and in him to the whole College of the Apostles, and in them to the whole Hierarchy. If you question why the Pope pretends to free souls from Purgatory, *tibi dabo claves* is his warrant; but if you tell him the Keys are only for binding

and

and looſing on Earth directly, and in Heaven conſequently; and that Purgatory is a part of Hell, or rather neither Earth nor Heaven nor Hell, and ſo the Keys ſeem to have nothing to do with it, then his Commiſſion is to be enlarged by a ſuppletory of reaſon and conſequences, and his Keys ſhall unlock this difficulty; for it is *clavis ſcientia* as well as *authoritatis*. And theſe Keys ſhall enable him to expound Scriptures infallibly, to determine Queſtions, to preſide in Councils, to dictate to all the World Magiſterially, to rule the Church, to diſpenſe with Oaths, to abrogate Laws: And if his Key of Knowledge will not, the Key of Authority ſhall, and *tibi dabo claves* ſhall answer for all. We have an inſtance in the ſingle fancy of one Man, what rare variety of matter is afforded from thoſe plain words of [*Oravi pro te Petre*]

Luk. 22. for that place ſays *Bellarmino*, is other-
 wiſe to be underſtood of *Peter*, otherwiſe of
 the Popes, and otherwiſe of the Church of *Rome*.
Bellar. lib. 4. de Pontif. c. 3. S. respondeo primo.

And [*pro te*] ſignifies that Chriſt prayed that *Peter* might neither err perſonally nor judicially, and that *Peters* Succeſſors if they did err perſonally, might not err judicially, and that the Roman Church might not err perſonally. All this variety of ſence is pretended by the fancy of one Man, to be in a few words which are as plain and ſimple as are any Words in Scripture. And what then in thoſe thouſands that are intricate? So is done with *paſce oves*, which a Man would think were a Commiſſion as innocent and guiltleſs of deſigns, as the Sheep in the folds are. But if it be asked why the Biſhop of *Rome* calls himſelf Universal Biſhop, *paſce oves* is his warrant? Why he pretends to a power of depoſing Princes, *Paſce oves*, ſaid Chriſt to *Peter*, the ſe-

H

cond

cond time. If it be demanded why alſo he pretends to a power of authorizing his ſubjects to kill him, *Pasce agnos* ſaid Chriſt the third time: And *paſce* is *doce*, and *paſce* is *Impera*, and *paſce* is *occide*. Now if others ſhould take the ſame (unreaſonableneſs I will not ſay, but the ſame) liberty in expounding Scripture, or if it be not licence taken, but that the Scripture it ſelf is ſo full and redundant in ſences quite contrary, what Man ſoever, or what Company of Men ſoever ſhall uſe this Principle, will certainly find ſuch rare productions from ſeveral places, that either the unreaſonableneſs of the thing will diſcover the error of the proceeding, or elſe there will be a neceſſity of permitting a great liberty of judgment, where is ſo infinite variety without limit or mark of neceſſary determination. If the firſt, then becauſe an error is ſo obvious and ready to our ſelves, it will be great imprudence or tyranny to be haſty in judging others; but if the latter, it is it that I contend for: for it is moſt unreaſonable, when either the thing it ſelf miniſters variety, or that we take licence to our ſelves in variety of interpretations, or proclaim to all the World our great weakneſs, by our actually being deceived, that we ſhould either preſcribe to others magiſterially when we are in error, or limit their underſtandings when the thing it ſelf affords liberty and variety.

S E C T. IV.

Of the difficulty of Expounding Scripture.

THEſe conſiderations are taken from the nature of Scripture it ſelf; but then if we Numb. 1. conſider that we have no certain ways of determining places of difficulty and Queſtion, infallibly and certainly, but that we muſt hope to be ſav'd in the belief of things plain, neceſſary and fundamental, and our pious endeavour to find out Gods meaning in ſuch places which he hath left under a cloud for other great ends reſerved to his own knowledge, we ſhall ſee a very great neceſſity in allowing a liberty in Propheſying without preſcribing authoritatively to other Mens Conſciencies, and becoming Lords and Maſters of their Faith. Now the means of expounding Scripture are either external, or internal. For the external, as Church Authority, Tradition, Fathers, Councils and Decrees of Biſhops, they are of a diſtinct conſideration, and follow after in their order. But here we will firſt conſider the invalidity and uncertainty of all thoſe means of expounding Scripture which are more proper and internal to the nature of the thing. The great Maſters of Commentaries, ſome whereof have undertaken to know all mysteries, have propounded many ways to expound Scripture, which indeed are excellent helps, but not infallible aſſiſtances, both becauſe themſelves are but moral inſtruments which force not truth *ex abſcondito*, as alſo becauſe they are not infallibly uſed and applyed. 1. ſometime the ſenſe is drawn forth by the con-

text and connexion of parts: It is well when it can be ſo. But when there is two or three antecedents, and ſubjects ſpoken of, what Man or what rule ſhall aſcertain me that I make my reference true by drawing the relation to ſuch an antecedent; to which I have a mind to apply it, another hath not. For in a contexture where one part does not always depend upon another, Where things of differing natures intervene and interrupt the firſt intentions, there it is not always very probable to expound Scripture, take its meaning by its proportion to the neighbouring words. But who deſires ſatisfaction in this, may read the obſervation verified in *S. Gregory's* morals upon *Job*, lib. 5. c. 29, and the inſtances he there brings are excellent proof, that this way of Interpretation does not warrant any Man to impoſe his Expositions upon the belief and underſtanding of other Men too confidently and magiſterially.

Numb. 2.

2. Another great pretence of medium is the conference of places, which *Illyricus* calls *ingenium remedium & feliciffimam expositionem ſanctæ ſcripturæ*; and indeed ſo it is if well and temperately uſed; but then we are beholding to them that do ſo, for there is no rule that can conſtrain them to it; for comparing of places is of ſo indefinite capacity, that if there be ambiguity of words, variety of ſenſe, alteration of circumſtances, or difference of ſtile amongſt Divine Writers, then there is nothing that may be more abuſed by wilful People, or may more eaſily deceive the unwary, or that may amuſe the moſt intelligent Obſerver. The Anabaptiſts take advantage enough in this proceeding, (and indeed ſo may any one that liſt) and when we pretend againſt them the neceſſity of baptizing all

by authority of *niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ & ſpiritu*, they have a parallel for it, and tell us that Chriſt will baptize us with the holy Ghoſt and with fire, and that one place expounds the other; and becauſe by fire is not meant an Element or any thing that is natural, but an Allegory and figurative expreſſion of the ſame thing; ſo alſo by water may be meant the figure ſignifying the effect or manner of operation of the holy Spirit. Fire in one place, and Water in the other, do but repreſent to us that Chriſts baptiſm is nothing elſe but the cleanſing and purifying us by the holy Ghoſt; But that which I here note as of greateſt concernment, and which in all reaſon ought to be an utter overthrow to this topique, is an univerſal abuſe of it among thoſe that uſe it moſt, and when two places ſeem to have the ſame expreſſion, or if a word have a double ſignification, becauſe in this place it may have ſuch a ſenſe, therefore it muſt, becauſe in one of the places the ſenſe is to their purpoſe, they conclude that therefore it muſt be ſo in the other too. An inſtance I give in the great Queſtion between the Socinians and the Catholicks. If any place be urg'd in which our Bleſſed Saviour is called God, they ſhew you two or three where the word God is taken in a depreſſed ſenſe, for a *quæſi Deus*, as when God ſaid to *Mofes*, *Conſtitui te Deum Pharaonis*; and hence they argue, becauſe I can ſhew the word is uſed for a *Deus factus*, therefore no Argument is ſufficient to prove Chriſt to be *Deus verus* from the appellative of *Deus*. And might not another argue to the exact contrary, and as well urge that *Mofes* is *Deus verus*, becauſe in ſome places the word *Deus* is uſed *pro Deo æterno*: Both ways the Argument concludes impiouſly and unreaſonably.

Its a fallacy *à poſſe ad eſſe affirmativè*; becauſe breaking of bread is ſometimes uſed for an Euchariftical manducation in Scripture; therefore I ſhall not from any testimony of Scripture affirming the firſt Chriſtians to have broken bread together, conclude that they liv'd hoſpitably and in common ſociety. Becauſe it may poſſibly be eluded, therefore it does not ſignifie any thing. And this is the great way of answering all the Arguments that can be brought againſt any thing that any Man hath a mind to defend; and any Man that reads any controverſies of any ſide, ſhall find as many inſtances of this vanity almoſt as he finds Arguments from Scripture; this fault was of old noted by S. *Auſtin*, for then they had got the trick; and he is angry at it, *neque enim putare debemus eſſe præſcriptum, ut quod in aliquo loco res aliqua per ſimilitudinem ſignificaverit, hoc etiam ſemper ſignificare credamus.*

*De doctri.
Chriſtian.
lib. 3.*

Numb. 3.

3. Oftentimes Scriptures are pretended to be expounded by a proportion and Analogy of reaſon and this is as the other, if it be well, its well. But unleſs there were ſome *intellectus univerſalis* furniſhed with infallible propoſitions, by referring to which every Man might argue infallibly, this Logick may deceive as well as any of the reſt. For it is with reaſon as with mens taſtes; although there are ſome general principles which are reaſonable to all men, yet every man is not able to draw out all its conſequences, nor to underſtand them when they are drawn forth, nor to believe when he does underſtand them. There is a precept of St. *Paul* directed to the *Theſſalonians* before they were gather'd into a body of a Church, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. *To withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly.* But if this precept were now obſerv'd, I would fain know

know whether we ſhould not fall into that inconvenience which St. Paul ſought to avoid in giving the ſame commandment to the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 5. 9. *I wrote to you that ye ſhould not company with fornicators; And yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then ye muſt go out of the world:* And therefore he reſtrains it to a quitting the ſociety of Chriſtians living ill lives. But now that all the world hath been Chriſtians, if we ſhould ſin in keeping company with vitious Chriſtians, muſt we not alſo go out of this World? Is not the precept made null, becauſe the reaſon is altered, and things are come about, and that the *οἱ πολλοί* are the brethren *ἀδελφοὶ ὀνομαζόμενοι* called brethren, as St. Paul's phraſe is? And yet either this never was conſidered, or not yet believed; for it is generally taken to be obligatory, though (I think) ſeldom practiſed. But when we come to expound Scriptures to a certain ſence by Arguments drawn from prudential motives, then we are in a vaſt plain without any ſufficient guide, and we ſhall have ſo many ſenſes, as there are humane prudences. But that which goes further than this, is a parity of Reaſon from a plain place of Scripture to an obſcure, from that which is plainly ſet down in a Text to another that is more remote from it. And thus is that place in St. Matthew forced, *If thy brother reſuſe to be amended, Dic eccleſiæ.* Hence ſome of the Roman Doctōrs argue, If Chriſt commands to tell the Church in caſe of Adultery or private injury, then much more in caſe of Hereſy. Well, ſuppoſe this to be a good Interpretation: Why muſt I ſtay here? Why may not I alſo add by a parity of reaſon, If the Church muſt be told of Hereſy, much more of Treason: And why may not I re-

duce all ſins to the cogniſance of a Church tribunal, as ſome Men do indirectly, and *Snecanus* does heartily and plainly? If a Mans principles be good, and his deductions certain, he need not care whither they carry him. But when an Authority is intruſted to a Perſon, and the extent of his power expreſſed in his Commiſſion, it will not be ſafety to meddle beyond his Commiſſion upon Confidence of a parity of reaſon. To inſtance once more; when Chriſt in *paſce oves* and *tu es Petrus*, gave power to the Pope to govern the Church (for to that ſence the Church of *Rome* expounds thoſe Authorities) by a certain conſequence of reaſon, ſay they, he gave all things neceſſary for exerciſe of this juriſdiction, and therefore in [*paſce oves*] he gave him an indirect power over Temporals, for that is neceſſary that he may do his duty: Well, having gone thus far, we will go further upon the parity of reaſon, therefore he hath given the Pope the gift of tongues, and he hath given him power to give it; for how elſe ſhall *Xavier* convert the *Indians*? He hath given him alſo power to command the Seas and the Winds, that they ſhould obey him, for this alſo is very neceſſary in ſome caſes, and ſo *paſce oves* is *accipe donum linguarum*, and *Impera ventis*, & *diſpone regum diademata*, & *laicorum pradia*, and *influentias cæli* too, and whatſoever the parity of reaſon will judge equally neceſſary in order to *paſce oves*; when a Man does ſpeak reaſon, it is but reaſon he ſhould be heard; but tho' he may have the good fortune, or the great abilities to do it, yet he hath not a certainty, no regular infallible aſſiſtance, no inſpiration of Arguments and deductions; and if he had, yet becauſe it muſt be reaſon that muſt judge of reaſon, unleſs other mens

under-

underſtandings were of the ſame ayre, the ſame conſtitution and ability, they cannot be preſcribed unto, by another mans reaſon; eſpecially becauſe ſuch reaſonings as uſually are in explication of particular places of Scripture, depend upon minute circumſtances and particularities, in which it is ſo eaſie to be deceiv'd, and ſo hard to ſpeak reaſon regularly and always, that it is the greater wonder if we be not deceived.

4. Others pretend to expound Scripture by *Numb. 4* the analogy of Faith, and that is the moſt ſure and infallible way (as it is thought:) but upon ſtricter ſurvey it is but a Chimera, a thing in *nubibus* which varies like the right hand and left hand of a Pillar, and at the beſt is but like the Coaſt of a Country to a Traveller out of his way; It may bring him to his journeys end though twenty mile about; it may keep him from running into the Sea, and from miſtaking a river for dry land; but whether this little path or the other be the right way it tells not. So is the analogy of Faith, that is, if I underſtand it right, the rule of Faith, that is the Creed. Now were it not a fine device to go to expound all the Scripture by the Creed, there being in it ſo many thouſand places which have no more relation to any Article in the Creed, than they have to *Tityre tu patula*? Indeed if a man reſolves to keep the analogy of Faith, that is to expound Scripture, ſo as not to do any violence to any fundamental Article, he ſhall be ſure however he errs, yet not to deſtroy Faith, he ſhall not periſh in his Expoſition. And that was the precept given by St. Paul, that all Propheſying ſhould be eſtimated καὶ ἀναλογία πίστεως, *Rom. 6. 12.* and to this very purpoſe, St. Auſtin in his Expoſition of *Genefis*, by way of Preface ſets down the

the Articles of Faith, with this design and protestation of it, that if he says nothing against those Articles, though he miss the particular sense of the place, there is no danger, or sin in his Exposition; but how that analogy of Faith should have any other influence in expounding such places in which those Articles of Faith are neither expressed, nor involv'd, I understand not. But then if you extend the analogy of Faith further than that which is proper to the rule or Symbol of Faith, then every Man expounds Scripture according to the analogy of Faith, but what? his own Faith: which Faith if it be questioned, I am no more bound to expound according to the analogy of another mans Faith, than he to expound according to the analogy of mine. And this is it that is complain'd on of all sides that overvalue their own opinions. Scripture seems so clearly to speak what they believe, that they wonder all the World does not see it as clear as they do; but they satisfy themselves with saying that it is because they come with prejudice, whereas if they had the true belief, that is, theirs, they would easily see what they see. And this is very true: For if they did believe as others believe, they would expound Scriptures to their sense; but if this be expounding according to the analogy of Faith, it signifies no more than this, Be you of my mind and then my Arguments will seem concluding, and my Authorities and Allegations pressing and pertinent: And this will serve on all sides, and therefore will do but little service to the determination of Questions, or prescribing to other mens Consciences on any side.

Lastly,

Laſtly, Conſulting the Originals is thought *Numb. 5.*
a great matter to Interpretation of Scriptures.
But this is to ſmall purpoſe: For indeed it will
expound the Hebrew and the Greek, and recti-
fie Tranſlations. But I know no man that ſays
that the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek are ea-
ſie and certain to be underſtood, and that they
are hard in Latin and Engliſh: The difficulty
is in the thing however it be expreſſed, the leaſt
is in the Language. If the Original Languages
were our mother Tongue, Scripture is not much
the eaſier to us; and a natural Greek or a Jew,
can with no more reaſon, nor Authority ob-
trude his Interpretation upon other mens Con-
ſciences, than a Man of another Nation. Add
to this that the Inſpection of the Original, is no
more certain way of Interpretation of Scriptrue
now then it was to the Fathers and Primitive
Ages of the Church; and yet he that obſerves
what infinite variety of Tranſlations of the Bible
were in the firſt Ages of the Church (as *S. Hi-*
erom obſerves) and never a one like another;
will think that we ſhall differ as much in our In-
terpretations as they did, and that the medium
is as uncertain to us as it was to them; and ſo
it is; witneſs the great number of late Tranſla-
tions, and the infinite number of Commentaries,
which are too pregnant an Argument that we
neither agree in the underſtanding of the words
nor of the ſence.

The truth is, all theſe ways of Interpreting *Numb. 6.*
of Scripture which of themſelves are good
helps, are made either by deſign, or by our
infirmities, ways of intricating and involving
Scriptures in greater difficulty, becauſe men do
not learn their doctrines from Scripture, but
come to the underſtanding of Scripture with
precon-

preconceptions and idea's of doctrines of their own, and then no wonder that Scriptures look like Pictures, wherein every man in the room believes they look on him only, and that where-soever he stands, or how often soever he changes his station. So that now what was intended for a remedy, becomes the promoter of our disease, and our meat becomes the matter of sicknesses: And the mischief is, the wit of man cannot find a remedy for it; for there is no rule, no limit, no certain principle, by which all men may be guided to a certain and so infallible an Interpretation, that he can with any equity prescribe to others to believe his Interpretations in places of controversy or ambiguity. A Man would think that the memorable Prophefy of *Jacob*, that the Scepter should not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* come, should have been so clear a determination of the time of the *Messias*, that a Jew should never have doubted it to have been verified in *Jesus of Nazareth*; and yet for this so clear vaticination, they have no less than twenty six Answers. *S. Paul* and *S. James* seem to speak a little diversly concerning Justification by Faith and Works, and yet to my understanding it is very easie to reconcile them: but all men are not of my mind; for *Osiander* in his confutation of the book which *Melancthon* wrote against him, observes, that there are twenty several opinions concerning Justification, all drawn from the Scriptures, by the men only of the *Augustan* Confession. There are sixteen several opinions concerning original sin; and as many definitions of the Sacraments as there are Sects of men that disagree about them.

And

And now what help is there for us in the *Numb. 7.* midst of these uncertainties? If we follow any one Translation, or any one Mans Commentary, what rule shall we have to chuse the right by? or is there any one man, that hath translated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? No Translation challenges such a prerogative as to be authentick, but the Vulgar Latin; and yet see with what good success: For when it was declared authentick by the Council of *Trent*, *Sixtus* put forth a Copy much mended of what it was, and tyed all Men to follow that; but that did not satisfie; for Pope *Clement* reviews and corrects it in many places, and still the Decree remains, in a changed subject. And secondly, that Translation will be very unapt to satisfie, in which one of their own Men, *Isidore Clarius*, a Monk of *Brescia*, found and mended eight thousand faults, besides innumerable others which he says he pretermitted. And then thirdly, to shew how little themselves were satisfied with it, divers learned Men amongst them did new translate the Bible, and thought they did God and the Church good service in it. So that if you take this for your precedent, you are sure to be mistaken infinitely; If you take any other, the Authors themselves do not promise you any security. If you resolve to follow any one as far only as you see cause, then you only do wrong or right by chance; for you have certainty just proportionable to your own skill, to your own infallibility. If you resolve to follow any one, whither soever he leads, we shall oftentimes come thither, where we shall see ourselves become ridiculous, as it happened in the case of *Spiridion* Bishop of *Cyprus*, who so resolv'd to follow his old Book, that when an eloquent
Bishop

Biſhop who was deſired to Preach read his Text, *Tu autem tolle cubile tuum & ambula*; Spiridion was very angry with him, becauſe in his Book it was *tolle lectum tuum*, and thought it arrogance in the Preacher to ſpeak better Latin than his Tranſlation had done: And if it be thus in Tranſlations, it is far worſe in Expositions: [*Quia ſcī. Scripturam ſacram pro ipſa ſui altitudine non uno eodemque ſenſu omnes accipiunt, ut penē quot homines tot illic ſententiæ erui poſſe videantur*, ſaid Vincent. *Lirinensis*] in which every man knows what innumerable ways there are of being miſtaken, God having in things not ſimply neceſſary left ſuch a difficulty upon thoſe parts of Scripture which are the ſubject matters of controverſy *ad edomandum labore ſuperbiam, & intellectum à ſaſtudio revocandum* (as St. Auſtin gives a reaſon) that all that err honeſtly, are therefore to be pitied, and tolerated, becauſe it may be the condition of every Man at one time or other.

Numb. 8.

The Sum is this; Since holy Scripture is the repository of divine Truths, and the great rule of Faith, to which all Sects of Chriſtians do appeal for probation of their ſeveral opinions, and ſince all agree in the Articles of the Creed as things clearly and plainly ſet down, and as containing all that which is of ſimple and prime neceſſity; and ſince on the other ſide there are in Scripture many other myſteries, and matters of Queſtion upon which there is a Veil; ſince there are ſo many Copies with infinite varieties of reading; ſince a various Interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent may much alter the ſence; ſince ſome places have divers literal ſences, many have ſpiritual, myſtical and Allegorical meanings; ſince there are ſo many tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties,

prieties and improprieties of language, whoſe underſtanding depends upon ſuch circumſtances that it is almoſt impoſſible to know its proper Interpretation; now that the knowledge of ſuch circumſtances and particular Stories is irrevocably loſt: ſince there are ſome myſteries which at the beſt advantage of expreſſion, are not eaſy to be apprehended, and whoſe explication, by reaſon of our imperfections, muſt needs be dark, ſometimes weak, ſometimes unintelligible: and laſtly, ſince thoſe ordinary means of expounding Scripture, as ſearching the Originals, conference of places, parity of reaſon, and analogy of Faith, are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible, he that is the wiſeſt and by conſequence the likelyeſt to expound trueſt in all probability of reaſon, will be very far from confidence, becauſe every one of theſe and many more are like ſo many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depreſſing our certainty of finding out truth in ſuch myſteries and amidſt ſo many difficulties. And therefore a wiſe man that conſiders this, would not willingly be preſcrib'd to by others; and therefore if alſo he be a juſt man, he will not impoſe upon others; for it is beſt every man ſhould be left in that liberty from which no man can juſtly take him, unleſs he could ſecure him from error: So that here alſo there is a neceſſity to conſerve the liberty of Propheſying, and interpreting Scripture; a neceſſity deriv'd from the conſideration of the difficulty of Scripture in Questions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium, of Interpretation.

S E C T. V.

*Of the insufficiency and uncertainty of Tradition
to Expound Scripture, or determine Questions.*

Numb. 1. **I**N the next place, we must consider those extrinsecal means of Interpreting Scripture, and determining Questions, which they most of all confide in that restrain Propheſying with the greatest Tyranny. The first and principal is Tradition, which is pretended not only to expound Scripture (*Necesse enim est propter tantos tam varii erroris anfractus, ut Prophetica & Apostolica interpretationis linea secundum Ecclesiasticam & Catholicam sensus normam dirigatur:*) but also to propound Articles upon a distinct stock, such Articles whereof there is no mention and proposition in Scripture. And in this topick, not only the distinct Articles are clear and plain, like as the fundamentals of Faith expressed in Scripture, but also it pretends to expound Scripture, and to determine Questions with so much clarity, and certainty, as there shall neither be error nor doubt remaining, and therefore no disagreeing is here to be endured. And indeed it is most true if Tradition can perform these pretensions, and teach us plainly, and assure us infallibly of all truths, which they require us to believe, we can in this case have no reason to disbelieve them, and therefore are certainly Hereticks if we do, because without a crime, without some humane interest or collateral design, we cannot disbelieve traditive Doctrine or traditive Interpretation, if it be infallibly prov'd to us that tradition is an infallible guide.

Vincent. Lirinensis in Commentor.

But

But here I firſt conſider that tradition is no *Numb. 2.*
 reſpository of Articles of Faith, and therefore
 the not following it is no Argument of hereſy;
 for beſides that I have ſhewed Scripture in its
 plain expreſſes to be an abundant rule of Faith
 and manners, Tradition is a topick as fallible
 as any other; ſo fallible that it cannot be ſuffi-
 cient evidence to any man in a matter of Faith
 or Queſtion of hereſy.

For, 1. I find that the Fathers were infinitely *Numb. 3.*
 deceived in their account and enumeration of
 Traditions, ſometimes they did call ſome Tra-
 ditions, ſuch, not which they knew to be ſo, but
 by Arguments and preſumptions they concluded
 them ſo. Such as was that of St. *Auſtin*, *ea quæ* *Epiſt. 118. ad*
universalis tenet Eccleſia nec à Conciliis inſtituta *Januar.*
reperiuntur, credibile eſt ab Apoſtolorum traditione *De bapt. contr.*
deſcendiſſe. *Donat. lib. 4*
c. 24. Now ſuppoſe this rule probable,
 that's the moſt, yet it is not certain; It might
 come by cuſtom, whoſe Original was not
 known, but yet could not derive from an Apo-
 ſtolical principle. Now when they conclude of
 particular Traditions by a general rule, and
 that general rule not certain, but at the moſt
 probable in any thing, and certainly falſe in
 ſome things, it is no wonder if the productions,
 that is, their judgments, and pretence fail ſo
 often. And if I ſhould but inſtance in all the
 particulars, in which Tradition was pretended
 falſly or uncertainly in the firſt Ages, I ſhould
 multiply them to a troubleſome variety; for it
 was then accounted ſo glorious a thing to have
 ſpoken with the perſons of the Apoſtles, that if
 any man could with any colour pretend to it,
 he might abuſe the whole Church, and obtrude
 what he liſted under the ſpecious title of A-
 poſtolical Tradition, and it is very notorious to

every man that will but read and observe the Recognitions or Stromata of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, where there is enough of such false warfare shewed in every book, and pretended to be less than from the Apostles. In the first Age after the Apostles, *Papias* pretended he received a Tradition from the Apostles, that Christ before the day of Judgment should reign a thousand years upon Earth, and his Saints with him in temporal felicities; and this thing proceeding from so great an Authority as the testimony of *Papias*, drew after it all or most of the Christians in the first three hundred years. For besides, that the Millenary opinion is expressly taught by *Papias*, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenaeus*, *Origen*, *Lactantius*, *Severus*, *Victorinus*, *Apollinarius*, *Nepos*, and divers others famous in their time. *Justin Martyr* in his Dialogue against *Trypho* says, it was the belief of all Christians exactly Orthodox, *καὶ ἐκ τῆς αἰῶνος καὶ κατὰ πάντα ὁρθοδόξως* *Χριστιανοί*, and yet there was no such Tradition but a mistake in *Papias*; but I find it nowhere spoke against, till *Dionysius* of *Alexandria* confuted *Nepos's* Book, and converted *Coracion* the *Egyptian* from the opinion. Now if a Tradition whose beginning of being called so began with a Scholar of the Apostles (for so was *Papias*) and then continued for some Ages upon the mere Authority of so famous a man, did yet deceive the Church: much more fallible is the pretence when two or three hundred years after, it begins to commence, and then by some learned man first called a Tradition Apostolical. And so happened in the case of the *Arrian* heresy, which the *Nicene* Fathers did confute by objecting the contrary Tradition Apostolical, as *Theodor* reports; and yet if they had not had better A

arguments from Scripture than from Tradition, they would have fail'd much in ſo good a cauſe; for this very pretence the *Arrians* themſelves made, and deſired to be tryed by the Fathers of the firſt three hundred years, which was a confutation ſufficient to them who pretended a clear Tradition, becauſe it was unimaginable that the Tradition ſhould leap ſo as not to come from the firſt to the laſt by the middle. But that this tryal was ſometime declined by that excellent man St. *Athanaſius*, although at other times confidently and truly pretended, it was an Argument the Tradition was not ſo * clear, * *ὁ γὰρ* but both ſides might with ſome fairneſs pretend *εἰς τίνες αὐτοὶ φίλοι ἔλεγον ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων γενομένων* to it. And therefore one of the prime Founders of their hereſy, the Heretick † *Artemon* having obſerved the advantage might be taken by any Sect that would pretend Tradition, *γινώσκοντες αὐτὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἀποφαινόμενοι. οἱς ἐσωτήθημαί, ἐδεῖ αὐτὸν πλεῖστοι ταῦτα μοι δοξάζοντες ἐποιεῖν.* becauſe the medium was plauſible and conſiſting of ſo many particulars, that it was hard to be redargued, pretended a Tradition from the Apoſtles, that Chriſt was *ἦλθ' ἀνθρώπου,* and that the Tradition did deſcend by a conſtant ſucceſſion in the Church of *Rome* to Pope *Victor's* time incluſively, and till *Zepherinus* had interrupted the ſeries and corrupted the Doctrine; which pretence if it had not had ſome appearance of truth, ſo as poſſibly to abuſe the Church, had not been worthy of confutation, which yet was with care undertaken by an old Writer, out of whom *Eusebius* tranſcribes a large paſſage to reprove the vanity of the pretender. But I obſerve from hence, that it was uſual to pretend to Tradition, and that it was eaſier pretended than confuted, and I doubt not but oftner done than diſcovered. A great Queſtion aroſe in *Africa* concerning the Baptiſm

Vide Petav. in Epiph. har. 69.

** ὁ γὰρ εἰς τίνες αὐτοὶ φίλοι ἔλεγον ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων γενομένων*
γινώσκοντες αὐτὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἀποφαινόμενοι. οἱς ἐσωτήθημαί, ἐδεῖ αὐτὸν πλεῖστοι ταῦτα μοι δοξάζοντες ἐποιεῖν.
Justin Mart. dial. cum Tryph. Jud. † Euseb. l. 1. c. 6.

of Hereticks, whether it were valid or no. St. Cyprian and his party appealed to Scripture; Stephen Biſhop of Rome and his party, would be judged by cuſtom and Tradition Eccleſiaſtical. See how much the nearer the Queſtion was to a determination, either that probation was not accounted by St Cyprian, and the Biſhops both of *Aſia* and *Africk*, to be a good Argument, and ſufficient to determine them, or there was no certain Tradition againſt them; for unleſs one of theſe two do it, nothing could excuſe them from oppoſing a known truth, unleſs peradventure St. Cyprian, Firmilian, the Biſhops of *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and almoſt two parts of the World were ignorant of ſuch a Tradition, for they knew of none ſuch, and ſome of them expreſſly denied it. And the ſixth general Synod approves of the Canon made in the Council of *Carthage* under Cyprian upon this very ground, becauſe in *predictorum præſulum locis & ſolum ſecundum traditam eis conſuetudinem ſervatus eſt*; they had a particular Tradition for Rebaptization, and therefore there could be no Tradition Univerſal againſt it, or if there were they knew not of it, but much for the contrary; and then it would be remembred that a conceal'd Tradition was like a ſilent Thunder, or a Law not promulgated; it neither was known, nor was obligatory. And I ſhall obſerve this too, that this very Tradition was ſo obſcure, and was ſo obſcurely delivered, ſilently proclaimed, that St. Auſtin, who diſputed againſt the *Donatiſts* upon this very Queſtion was not able to prove it, but by a conſequence which he thought probable and credible, as appears in his diſcourſe againſt the *Donatiſts*. The Apoſtles ſaith St. Auſtin, preſcrib'd

Can. 2.

L. 5. de Baptiſm. contr. Donat. c. 23.

preſcrib'd nothing in this particular: But this cuſtom which is contrary to Cyprian ought to be believed to have come from their Tradition, as many other things which the Catholick Church obſerves. That's all the ground and all the reaſon; nay the Church did waver concerning that Queſtion, and before the deciſion of a Council, Cyprian and others might diſſent without breach of charity. It was plain then there was no clear Tradition in the Queſtion, poſſibly there might be a cuſtom in ſome Churches poſt-nate to the times of the Apoſtles, but nothing that was obligatory, no Tradition Apoſtolicall. But this was a ſuppletory device ready at hand whenever they needed it; and St. Auſtin con-
Lib. 1. de Baptiſm. c. 18.
 futed the Pelagians, in the Queſtion of Original ſin, by the cuſtom of exorcism and inſufflation, which St. Auſtin ſaid came from the Apoſtles by Tradition, which yet was then, and is now ſo impoſſible to be prov'd, that he that ſhall affirm it, ſhall gain only the reputation of a bold man and a confident.
De peccat. originali, 2. c. 40. contra Pelag. & Caleſt.

2. I conſider if the report of Traditions in the Primitive times ſo near the Ages Apoſtolicall was ſo uncertain, that they were fain to aim at them by conjectures, and grope as in the dark, the uncertainty is much encreaſed ſince, be-
Numb. 4.
 cauſe there are many famous Writers whoſe works are loſt, which yet if they had continued, they might have been good records to us, as Clemens Romanus, Egeſippus, Nepos, Coracion, Dionyſius Areopagite, of Alexandria, of Corinth, Firmilian and many more: And ſince we ſee pretences have been made without reaſon in thoſe Ages where they might better have been confuted, than now they can, it is greater prudence to ſuſpect any later pretences, ſince ſo

many Sects have been, ſo many wars, ſo many corruptions in Authors, ſo many Authors loſt, ſo much ignorance hath intervened, and ſo many intereſts have been ſerved, that now the rule is to be altered; and whereas it was of old time credible, that that was Apoſtolical whoſe beginning they knew not, now quite contrary we cannot ſafely believe them to be Apoſtolical unleſs we do know their beginning to have been from the Apoſtles. For this conſiſting of probabilities and particulars, which put together make up a moral demonſtration, the Argument which I now urge hath been growing theſe fifteen hundred years; and if anciently there was ſo much as to evacuate the Authority of Tradition, much more is there now abſolutely to deſtroy it, when all the particulars, which time and infinite variety of humane accidents have been amassing together, are now concentrated, and are united by way of conſtipation. Becauſe every Age and every great change, and every hereſy, and every intereſt, hath increaſed the difficulty of finding out true Traditions.

Numb. 5.

3. There are very many Traditions which are loſt, and yet they are concerning matters of as great conſequence as moſt of thoſe Questions for the determination whereof Traditions are pretended: It is more than probable, that as in Baptiſm and the Eucharift the very forms of miniſtration are tranſmitted to us, ſo alſo in confirmation and ordination, and that there were ſpecial directions for viſitation of the ſick, and explicate interpretations of thoſe difficult places of *St. Paul* which *St. Peter* affirmed to be ſo difficult that the ignorant do wreſt them to their own damnation, and yet no Church hath conſerved theſe or thoſe many more which

St. Baſil

St. Baſil affirms to be ſo many that *ὅτιλείπει ἡμέρα* Cap. 29. *de*
πὶ ἀγαρα ἡ ἐκκλησίας μυθήρια διηγόμενον; the *ſir. SanH.*
 day would fail him in the very ſimple enumeration of all Traditions Eccleſiaſtical. And if the Church hath fail'd in keeping the great variety of Traditions, it will hardly be thought a fault in a private perſon to neglect Tradition, which either the whole Church hath very much neglected inculpably, or elſe the whole Church is very much to blame. And who can aſcertain us that ſhe hath not entertained ſome which are no Traditions as well as loſt thouſands that are? That ſhe did entertain ſome falſe Traditions, I have already prov'd; but it is alſo as probable that ſome of thoſe which theſe Ages did propound for Traditions, are not ſo, as it is certain that ſome which the firſt Ages call'd Traditions, were nothing leſs.

4. There are ſome opinions which when they *Numb. 8.*
 began to be publickly received, began to be accounted prime Traditions, and ſo became ſuch not by a native title, but by adoption; and nothing is more uſual than for the Fathers to colour their popular opinion with ſo great an appellative. St. Auſtin call'd the communicating of Infants an Apoſtolical Tradition, and yet we do not praſtiſe it, becauſe we diſbelieve the Allegation. And that every cuſtom, which at firſt introduction was but a private fancy or ſingular praſtice, grew afterwards into a publick rite and went for a Tradition after a while continuance, appears by Tertullian who ſeems to *Contra Mar-*
 juſtifie it, *Non enim exiſtimas tu licitum eſſe cui-*
cunque fideli conſtituere quod Deo placere illi viſum
ſuerit, ad diſciplinam & ſalutem. And again, *a*
quocunque traditore cenſetur, nec authorem reſpicias *De coron-*
ſed authoritatem. And St. Hierom moſt plainly, *lit. c. 3. & 4.*

And Exſeb.
l. 5. c. 24.

Præcepta majorum Apostolicas Traditiones quisque existimat. And when Irenæus had observed that great variety in the keeping of Lent, which yet to be a forty days Fast is pretended to descend from Tradition Apostolical, some fasting but one day before Easter, some two, some forty, and this even long before Irenæus time, he gives this reason, *Varietas illa jejunii cœpit apud Majores nostros qui non accuratè consuetudinem eorum qui vel simplicitate quâdam vel privata authoritate in posterum aliquid statuisſent, observarant* [extra translatione Christophorſoni:] And there are yet some points of good concernment, which if any man should Question in a high manner, they would prove indeterminable by Scripture, or sufficient reason, and yet I doubt not their confident Defenders would say they are opinions of the Church, and quickly pretend a Tradition from the very Apostles, and believe themselves so secure that they could not be discovered, because the Question never having been disputed, gives them occasion to say that which had no beginning known, was certainly from the Apostles. For why should not Divines do in the Question of reconfirmation as in that of rebaptization? Are not the grounds equal from an indelible character in one as in the other; and if it happen such a Question as this after contestation should be determin'd not by any positive decree, but by the cession of one part, and the Authority and reputation of the other, does not the next Age stand fair to be abused with a pretence of Tradition in the matter of reconfirmation, which never yet came to a serious Question? For so it was in the Question of rebaptization for which there was then no more evident Traditions than there

there is now in the Queſtion of reconfirmation, as I proved formerly, but yet 'twas carried upon that Title.

5. There is great variety in the probation of Tradition, ſo that whatever is proved to be Tradition, is not equally and alike credible; for nothing but univerſal Tradition is of it ſelf credible; other Traditions in their juſt proportion as they partake of the degrees of univerſality. Now that a Tradition be univerſal, or which is all one that it be a credible Teſtimony, St. *Irenæus* requires that Tradition ſhould derive from all the Churches Apoſtolic. And therefore according to this rule there was no ſufficient medium to determine the Queſtion about Eaſter, becauſe the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches had ſeveral Traditions reſpectively, and both pretended from the Apoſtles. *Clement* *Alexandrinus* ſays, it was a ſeret Tradition from the Apoſtles that Chriſt preached but one year: But *Irenæus* ſays it did derive from Here-ticks, and ſays that he by Tradition firſt from St. *John*, and then from his Diſciples received another Tradition, that Chriſt was almoſt fifty years old when he dyed, and ſo by conſe-quence preached almoſt twenty years; both of them were deceived, and ſo had all that had be-lieved the report of either pretending Tradition Apoſtolic. Thus the cuſtom in the Latin Church of faſting on Saturday was againſt that Tradition which the Greeks had from the Apoſtles; and therefore by this diviſion and want of conſent, which was the true Tradition, was ſo abſolutely indeterminable, that both muſt needs loſe much of their reputation. But how then when not only particular Churches but ſingle per-ſons are all the proof we have for a Tradition?

And

Numb. 7.

Lib. 3. c. 4.

L. I. Stromat.

L. 2. c. 39.

Omnes Senio-
res teſtantur
qui in Aſia a-
pud Johannem
Discipulum

Domini conve-
nerunt id ip-
ſum tradiſſe
eis Johannem,
&c. & qui al-
ios Apoſtolos
viderunt hac
eandem ab ipſis
audierunt &
teſtantur de
ejuſmodi rela-
tione.

*Salmeron.
dissert. 51. in
Rom.*

And this often happened ; I think St. *Austin* is the chief Argument and Authority we have for the Assumption of the Virgin *Mary* ; the Baptism of Infants is called a Tradition by *Origen* alone at first, and from him by others. The procession of the holy Ghost from the Son, which is an Article the Greek Church disavows, derives from the Tradition Apostolical, as it is pretended ; and yet before St. *Austin* we hear nothing of it very clearly or certainly, for as much as that whole mystery concerning the blessed Spirit was so little explicated in Scripture, and so little derived to them by Tradition, that till the Council of *Nice*, you shall hardly find any form of worship or personal address of devotion to the holy Spirit, as *Erasmus* observes, and I think the contrary will very hardly be verified. And for this particular in which I instance, whatsoever is in Scripture concerning it, is against that which the Church of *Rome* calls Tradition, which makes the Greeks so confident as they are of the point, and is an Argument of the vanity of some things which for no greater reason are called Traditions, but because one man hath said so, and that they can be proved by no better Argument to be true. Now in this case wherein Tradition descends upon us with unequal certainty, it would be very unequal to require of us an absolute belief of every thing not written, for fear we be accounted to slight Tradition Apostolical. And since nothing can require our supreme assent, but that which is truly Catholick and Apostolick, and to such a Tradition is requir'd as *Irenæus* says, the consent of all those Churches which the Apostles planted, and where they did preside, this topick will be of so little use in

in judging heresies that (besides what is deposited in Scripture) it cannot be proved in any thing but in the Canon of Scripture it self, and as it is now received, even in that there is some variety.

And therefore there is wholly a mistake in this business; for when the Fathers appeal to Tradition, and with much earnestness, and some clamour they call upon Hereticks to conform to or to be tryed by Tradition, it is such a Tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Christianity, which were also recorded in Scripture. But because the Canon was not yet perfectly consign'd, they call'd to that testimony they had, which was the testimony of the Churches Apostolical, whose Bishops and Priests being the *Antistites religionis*, did believe and preach Christian Religion and conserve all its great mysteries according as they had been taught. *Irenæus* calls this a Tradition Apostolical, *Christum accepisse calicem, & dixisse sanguinem suum esse, & docuisse novam oblationem novi Testamenti, quam Ecclesia per Apostolos accipiens offert per totum mundum.* And the Fathers in these Ages confute Hereticks by Ecclesiastical Tradition, that is, they confront against their impious and blasphemous doctrines that Religion which the Apostles having taught to the Churches where they did preside, their Successors did still preach, and for a long while together suffered not the enemy to sow tares amongst their wheat. And yet these doctrines which they called Traditions, were nothing but such fundamental truths which were in Scripture, as *πάντα σύμφωνα ταῖς γραφαῖς*, as *Irenæus* in *Eusebius* observes, in the instance of *Polycarpus*, and it is manifest by considering what

Num^b. 8.

Lib. 5. cap. 20

*Vide Irena.
l. 3. & 4. conti.
heres.*

what heresies they fought against, the heresies of *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, *Nicolaitans*, *Valentinians*, *Carpocratians*, persons that denyed the Son of God, the Unity of the God-head, that preached impurity, that practised Sorcery and Witch-craft. And now that they did rather urge Tradition against them than Scripture was, because the publick Doctrine of all the Apostolical Churches was at first more known and famous than many parts of the Scripture, and because some Hereticks, denyed St. *Luke's* Gospel, some received none but St. *Matthew's*, some rejected all St. *Paul's* Epistles, and it was a long time before the whole Canon was consign'd by universal Testimony, some Churches having one part some another, *Rome* her self had not all, so that in this case the Argument from Tradition was the most famous, the most certain, and the most prudent. And now according to this rule they had more Traditions than we have, and Traditions did by degrees lessen as they came to be written, and their necessity was less, as the knowledge of them was ascertained to us by a better Keeper of Divine Truths. All that great mysteriousness of Christs Priest-hood, the unity of his Sacrifice, Christs Advocation and Intercession for us in Heaven, and many other excellent Doctrines might very well be accounted Traditions before St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Hebrews* was publish'd to all the World; but now they are written truths; and if they had not, possibly we might either have lost them quite, or doubted of them as we do of many other Traditions, by reason of the insufficiency of the propounder. And therefore it was that St. *Peter* took order that the Gospel should be Writ, for he had promised that he would

2 Pet. I. 13.

would do something which after his decease should have these things in remembrance. He knew it was not safe trusting the report of men where the fountain might quickly run dry, or be corrupted so insensibly, that no cure could be found for it, nor any just notice taken of it till it were incurable. And indeed there is scarce any thing but what is written in Scripture, that can with any confidence of Argument pretend to derive from the Apostles, except rituals, and manners of ministration; but no doctrines or speculative mysteries are so transmitted to us by so clear a current, that we may see a visible channel, and trace it to the Primitive fountains. It is said to be a Tradition Apostolical, that no Priest should baptize without Chrism and the command of the Bishop: Suppose it were, yet we cannot be oblig'd to believe it with much confidence, because we have but little proof for it, scarce any thing but the single testimony of St. *Hierom.* *Dialog. adv. Lucifer.* And yet if it were, this is but a ritual, of which in passing by, I shall give that account: That, suppose this and many more rituals did derive clearly from Tradition Apostolical (which yet but very few do) yet it is hard that any Church should be charged with a crime for not observing such rituals, because we see some of them which certainly did derive from the Apostles, are expir'd and gone out in a desuetude; such as are abstinence from blood, and from things strangled, the cœnositick life of secular persons, the college of widows, to worship standing upon the Lords-day, to give milk and honey to the newly baptized, and many more of the like nature; now there having been no mark to distinguish the necessity of one from the indiffe-

indifferency of the other, they are all alike neceſſary, or alike indifferent, if the former, why does no Church obſerve them? if the latter, why does the Church of *Rome* charge upon others the ſhame of novelty, for leaving of ſome Rites and Ceremonies which by her own practice we are taught to have no obligation in them, but to be adiaphorous? *St. Paul* gave order, that a Biſhop ſhould be the Husband of one Wife; The Church of *Rome* will not allow ſo much; other Churches allow more: The Apoſtles commanded Chriſtians to Faſt on Wednesday and Friday, as appears in their Canons: The Church of *Rome* Faſts Friday and Saturday, and not on Wednesday: The Apoſtles had their Agapæ or love Feaſts, we ſhould believe them ſcandalous: They uſed a kiſs of charity in ordinary addreſſes, the Church of *Rome* keeps it only in their Maſs, other Churches quite omit it: The Apoſtles permitted Prieſts and Deacons to live in conjugal Society as appears in the 5. Canon of the Apoſtles (which to them is an Argument who believe them ſuch) and yet the Church of *Rome*, by no means will endure it; nay more,

The ſacr. hom.
continens.
lib. 5. c. 105.

De Tradit.
part. 3. c. de
Auſtor. Can.
Apoſt.

Michael Medina gives Teſtimony that of 84 Canons Apoſtolical which *Clemens* collected, ſcarce ſix or eight are obſerved by the Latin Church, and *Pereſius* gives this account of it, *In illis contineri multa quæ temporum corruptione non plenè obſervantur, aliis pro temporis & materie qualitate aut oblitteratis, aut totius Eccleſiæ magiſterio abrogatis.* Now it were good that they which take a liberty to themſelves, ſhould alſo allow the ſame to others. So that for one thing or other, all Traditions excepting thoſe very few that are abſolutely univerſal, will loſe all their obligation, and become no competent medium

medium to confine mens practices, or limit their faiths, or determine their perſuaſions. Either for the difficulty of their being prov'd, the incompetency of the testimony that tranſmits them, or the indifferency of the thing tranſmitted, all Traditions both ritual and doctrinal are diſabled from determining our conſciences either to a neceſſary believing or obeying.

6. To which I add by way of confirmation, *Numb. 9.* that there are ſome things called Traditions, and are offered to be proved to us by a Testimony, which is either falſe or not extant. *Clement* of *Alexandria* pretended it a Tradition that the Apoſtles preached to them that dyed in infidelity, even after their death, and then raiſed them to life, but he proved it only by the Testimony of the Book of *Hermes*; he affirmed it to be a Tradition Apoſtolicall, that the Greeks were ſaved by their Philoſophy, but he had no other Authority for it but the Apocryphal Books of *Peter* and *Paul*. *Tertullian* and *St. Baſil* pretend it an Apoſtolicall Tradition, to ſign in the air with the ſign of the Croſs, but this was only conſign'd to them in the Goſpel of *Nicodemus*. But to inſtance once for all in the Epiſtle of *Marcellus* to the Biſhop of *Antioch*, where he affirms that it is the Canon of the Apoſtles, *prater ſententiam Romanæ Pontificis, non poſſe Concilia celebrari*. And yet there is no ſuch Canon extant, nor ever was for ought appears in any Record we have; and yet the Collection of the Canons is ſo intire, that though it hath ſomething more than what was Apoſtolicall, yet it hath nothing leſs. And now that I am caſually fallen upon an inſtance from the Canons of the Apoſtles, I conſider that there cannot in the world a greater inſtance

*Apud Grati-
an diſt. 16. c.
Canones.*

*Lib. 1. c. 18.
de Orthod ſide.*

instance be given how eaſy it is to be abuſed in the believing of Traditions. For firſt to the firſt 50. which many did admit for Apoſtolical, 35 more were added, which moſt men now count ſpurious, all men call dubious, and ſome of them univerſally condemned by peremptory ſentence, even by them who are greateſt admirers of that Collection, as 65. 67. and 84 Canons. For the firſt 50. it is evident that there are ſome things ſo mixt with them, and no mark of difference left, that the credit of all is much impared, inſomuch that *Iſidore of Sevil* ſays, *they were Apocryphal, made by Hereticks, and publiſhed under the title Apoſtolical, but neither the Fathers nor the Church of Rome did give aſſent to them.* And yet they have prevail'd ſo far amongſt ſome, that *Damaſcen* is of opinion they ſhould be received equally with the Canonical writings of the Apoſtles. One thing only I obſerve (and we ſhall find it true in moſt writings, whoſe Authority is urged in Questions of *Theology*) that the Authority of the Tradition is not it which moves the aſſent, but the nature of the thing; and becauſe ſuch a Canon is delivered, they do not therefore believe the ſanction or propoſition ſo deliver'd, but diſbelieve the Tradition, if they do not like the matter, and ſo do not judge of the matter by the Tradition but of the Tradition by the matter. And thus the Church of *Rome* rejects the 84 or 85 Canon of the Apoſtles, not becauſe it is delivered with leſs Authority, than the laſt 35 are, but becauſe it reckons the Canon of Scripture otherwiſe than it is at *Rome*. Thus alſo the fifth Canon amongſt the firſt 50, becauſe it approves the marriage of Priests and Deacons does not perſwade them

to

to approve of it too, but it self becomes suspected for approving it: So that either they accuse themselves of palpable contempt of the Apostolical Authority, or else that the reputation of such Traditions is kept up to serve their own ends, and therefore when they encounter them, they are more to be upheld; which what else is it but to teach all the World to condemn such pretences and undervalue Traditions, and to supply to others a reason why they should do that, which to them that give the occasion is most unreasonable?

7. The Testimony of the Ancient Church being the only means of proving Tradition, and sometimes their dictates and doctrine being the Tradition pretended of necessity to be imitated, it is considerable that men in their estimate of it, take their rise from several Ages and differing Testimonies, and are not agreed about the competency of their Testimony; and the reasons that on each side make them differ, are such as make the Authority it self the less authentick and more repudiable. Some will allow only of the three first Ages, as being most pure, most persecuted, and therefore most holy, least interested, serving fewer designs, having fewest factions, and therefore more likely to speak the truth for Gods sake and its own, as best complying with their great end of acquiring Heaven in recompence of losing their lives: Others

Numb. 103

* say, that those Ages being persecuted minded the present Doctrines proportionable to their purposes and constitution of the Ages, and make little or nothing of those Questions which at this day vex Christendom: And both speak true: The first Ages speak greatest truth, but least pertinently. The next Ages, the Ages

**Vid. Card.
Petren: lettre
au Sieur Ca-
santon.*

of the four general Councils ſpake ſome things not much more pertinently to the preſent Queſtions, but were not ſo likely to ſpeak true, by reaſon of their diſpoſitions contrary to the capacity and circumſtance of the firſt Ages; and if they ſpeak wiſely as Doctors, yet not certainly as witneſſes of ſuch propoſitions which the firſt Ages noted not; and yet unleſs they had noted could not poſſibly be Traditions. And therefore either of them will be leſs uſeleſs as to our preſent affairs. For indeed the Queſtions which now are the publick trouble, were not conſidered or thought upon for many hundred years, and therefore prime Tradition there is none as to our purpoſe, and it will be an inſufficient medium to be uſed or pretended in the determination; and to diſpute concerning the truth or neceſſity of Traditions, in the Queſtions of our times, is as if Hiſtorians diſputing about a Queſtion in the Engliſh Story, ſhould fall on wrangling whether *Livy* or *Plutarch* were the beſt Writers: And the earneſt diſputes about Traditions are to no better purpoſe. For no Church at this day admits the one half of thoſe things, which certainly by the Fathers were called Traditions Apoſtolicall, and no Teſtimony of ancient Writers does conſign the one half of the preſent Queſtions, to be or not to be Traditions. So that they who admit only the Doctrine and Teſtimony of the firſt Ages cannot be determined in moſt of their doubts which now trouble us, becauſe their Writings are of matters wholly differing from the preſent diſputes, and they which would bring in after Ages to the Authority of a competent judge or witneſs, ſay the ſame thing; for they plainly confeſs that the firſt Ages ſpake little or nothing to the preſent Queſtion.

Question, or at leaſt nothing to their ſenſe of them; for therefore they call in aid from the following Ages, and make them ſuppletory and auxiliary to their deſigns, and therefore there are no Traditions to our purpoſes. And they who would willingly have it otherwiſe, yet have taken no courſe it ſhould be otherwiſe; for they when they had opportunity in the Councils of the laſt Ages to determine what they had a mind to, yet they never named the number, nor expreſſed the particular Traditions which they would fain have the World believe to be Apoſtolic: But they have kept the bridle in their own hands, and made a reſerve of their own power, that if need be, they may make new pretenſions, or not be put to it to juſtify the old by the engagement of a conciliary declaration.

Laſtly, We are acquitted by the Teſtimony *Numb. 11.* of the Primitive Fathers, from any other neceſſity of believing, than of ſuch Articles as are recorded in Scripture: And this is done by them, whoſe Authority is pretended the greateſt Argument for Tradition, as appears largely in *Irenæus*, who diſputes profeſſedly for the ſufficiency of Scripture againſt certain Hereticks, who affirm ſome neceſſary truths not to be written. It was an excellent ſaying of *St. Baſil* and will never be wipt out with all the eloquence of *Perron* [in his *Serm. de fide. Manifeſtus eſt fidei lapſus, & liquidum ſuperbiæ vitium vel reſpuere aliquid eorum quæ Scriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod ſcriptum non eſt.*] And it is but a poor device to ſay that every particular Tradition is conſigned in Scripture by thoſe places which give Authority to Tradition; and ſo the introducing of Tradition is not a ſuper-inducing any

*Lib. 3. ca. 2.
contr. hæreſ.*

thing over or beſides Scripture, becauſe Tradition is like a Meſſenger, and the Scripture is like his Letters of Credence, and therefore Authorizes whatſoever Tradition ſpeaketh. For ſuppoſing Scripture does conſign the Authority of Tradition (which it might do before all the whole Inſtrument of Scripture it ſelf was conſign'd, and then afterwards there might be no need of Tradition) yet ſuppoſing it, it will follow that all thoſe Tradition) which are truly prime and Apoſtolical, are to be entertain'd according to the intention of the Deliverers, which indeed is ſo reaſonable of it ſelf, that we need not Scripture to perſuade us to it; it ſelf is authentick as Scripture is, if it derives from the ſame fountain; and a word is never the more the Word of God for being written, nor the leſs for not being written; but it will not follow that whatſoever is pretended to be Tradition, is ſo, neither is the credit of the particular inſtances conſign'd in Scripture; *et doſus verſatur in generalibus*, but that this craft is too palpable. And if a general and indefinite conſignation of Tradition be ſufficient to warrant every particular that pretends to be Tradition, then St. *Baſil* had ſpoken to no purpoſe by ſaying it is Pride and Apoſtacy from the Faith, to bring in what is not written: For if either any man brings in what is written, or what he ſays is delivered, then the firſt being expreſs Scripture, and the ſecond being conſign'd in Scripture, no man can be charged with ſuper-inducing what is not written, he hath his Answer ready; and then theſe are zealous words abſolutely to no purpoſe; but if ſuch general conſignation does not warrant every thing that pretends to Tradition, but only ſuch as are truly

ly

ly prov'd to be Apoſtolicall; then Scripture is uſeleſs as to this particular; for ſuch Tradition gives teſtimony to Scripture, and therefore is of it ſelf firſt, and more credible, for it is credible of it ſelf; and therefore unleſs St. *Baſil* thought that all the will of God in matters of Faith and Doctrin were written, I ſee not what end nor what ſenſe he could have in theſe words: For no man in the world except *Enthuſiaſts* and mad-men ever obtruded a Doctrin upon the Church, but he pretended Scripture for it or Tradition, and therefore no man could be preſſed by theſe words, no man confuted, no man inſtructed, no not *Enthuſiaſts* or *Montaniſts*. For ſuppoſe either of them ſhould ſay, that ſince in Scripture the holy Ghoſt is promiſed to abide with the Church for ever, to teach, whatever they pretend the Spirit in any Age hath taught them, is not to ſuper-induce any thing beyond what is written, becauſe the truth of the Spirit, his veracity, and his perpetual teaching being promiſed and atteſted in Scripture, Scripture hath juſt ſo conſign'd all ſuch Revelations, as *Perron* ſaith it hath all ſuch Traditions. But I will trouble my ſelf no more with Arguments from any humane Authorities; but he that is ſurprized with the belief of ſuch Authorities, and will but conſider the very many Teſtimonies of Antiquity to this purpoſe, as of * *Conſtantine*, † *S. Hierom*, || *S. Auſtin*, * *S. Athanaſius*, † *S. Hilary*, || *St. Epiphanius*, and divers others, all ſpeaking words to the ſame ſenſe, with that ſaying of St. * *Paul*, *Nemo ſentiat ſuper quod ſcriptum eſt*, will ſee that there is reaſon, that ſince no man is materially a Heretick, but he that errs in a point of Faith, and all Faith is ſufficiently recorded in Scripture, the judgment

* *Orat. ad Nicen. PP. apud Theodor. l. 1. c. 7.*

† *In Matth. l. 4. c. 23. & in Aggaum.*

|| *De bono viduil. c. 1.*

* *Orat. contr. gent.*

† *In Pſal. 132.*

|| *L. 2. contra hereſ. tom. 1. bar. 61.*

* *1. Cor. 4.*

of Faith and Hereſy is to be deriv'd from thence, and no man is to be condemned for diſſenting in an Article for whoſe probation Tradition only is pretended; only according to the degree of its evidence, let every one determine himſelf, but of this evidence we muſt not judge for others; for unleſs it be in things of Faith, and abſolute certainties, evidence is a word of relation, and ſo ſuppoſes two terms, the object and the faculty; and it is an imperfect ſpeech to ſay a thing is evident in it ſelf (unleſs we ſpeak of firſt principles or cleareſt revelations) for that may be evident to one that is not ſo to another, by reaſon of the pregnancy of ſome apprehenſions, and the immaturity of others.

This Diſcourſe hath its intention in Traditions Doctrinal and Ritual, that is ſuch Traditions which propoſe Articles new *in materiâ*; but now if Scripture be the repository of all Divine Truths ſufficient for us, Tradition muſt be conſidered as its inſtrument, to convey its great myſteriouſneſs to our underſtandings; it is ſaid there are traditive Interpretations as well as traditive propoſitions, but theſe have not much diſtinct conſideration in them, both becauſe their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former conſiderations; as alſo becauſe in very deed, there are no ſuch things as traditive Interpretations univerſal: For as for particulars they ſignifie no more, but that they are not ſufficient determinations of Questions Theological, therefore becauſe they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more Argument than the particular authority of thoſe men whoſe Commentaries they are, and therefore muſt be conſidered with them.

The ſum is this: Since the Fathers who are *Numb. 12.* the beſt Witneſſes of Traditions, yet were infinitely deceived in their account, ſince ſometimes they gueſt at them and conjectured by way of Rule and Diſcourſe, and not of their knowledge, not by evidence of the thing; ſince many are called Traditions which were not ſo, many are uncertain whether they were or no, yet confidently pretended; and this uncertainty which at firſt was great enough, is increaſed by infinite cauſes and accidents in the ſucceſſion of 1600 years; ſince the Church hath been either ſo careleſs or ſo abuſed that ſhe could not, or would not preſerve Traditions with carefulneſs and truth; ſince it was ordinary for the old Writers to ſet out their own fancies, and the Rites of their Church which had been Ancient under the ſpecious Title of Apoſtolical Traditions; ſince ſome Traditions rely but upon ſingle Teſtimony at firſt, and yet deſcending upon others, come to be atteſted by many, whoſe Teſtimony though conjunct, yet in value is but ſingle, becauſe it relies upon the firſt ſingle Relator, and ſo can have no greater authority, or certainty, than they derive from the ſingle Perſon; ſince the firſt Ages who were moſt competent to conſign Tradition, yet did conſign ſuch Traditions as be of a nature wholly diſcrepant from the preſent Queſtions, and ſpeak nothing at all or very imperfectly to our purpoſes; and the following Ages are no fit Witneſſes of that which was not tranſmitted to them, becauſe they could not know it at all, but by ſuch tranſmiſſion and prior conſignation; ſince what at firſt was a Tradition, came afterwards to be written, and ſo ceaſed its being a Tradition; yet the credit of Traditions

commenc'd upon the certainty and reputation of thoſe truths firſt delivered by a word, afterward conſigned by writing; ſince what was certainly Tradition Apoſtolic, as many Rituals were, are rejected by the Church in ſeveral Ages, and are gone out into a deſuetude; and laſtly, ſince, beſide the no neceſſity of Traditions, there being abundantly enough in Scripture, there are many things called Traditions by the Fathers which they themſelves either proved by no Authors, or by Apochryphal and Spurious and Heretical, the matter of Tradition will in very much be ſo uncertain, ſo falſe, ſo ſuſpicious, ſo contradictory, ſo improbable, ſo unproved, that if a Queſtion be conteſted and be offered to be proved only by Tradition, it will be very hard to impoſe ſuch a propoſition to the belief of all Men with any imperiouſneſs or reſolved determination, but it will be neceſſary Men ſhould preſerve the liberty of believing and propheſying, and not part with it, upon a worſe merchandize and exchange than *Eſau* made for his birth-right.

S E C T. VI.

*Of the uncertainty and insufficiency of Councils
Eccleſiaſtical to the ſame purpoſe.*

Numb. 1. **B**UT ſince we are all this while in uncertainty, it is neceſſary that we ſhould addreſs our ſelves ſomewhere, where we may reſt the ſole of our Foot: And Nature, Scripture and Experience teach the World in matters of Queſtion to ſubmit to ſome final ſentence. For it is not
reaſon

reason that controversies should continue till the erring person shall be willing to condemn himself: and the Spirit of God hath directed us by that great precedent at *Jerusalem*, to address our selves to the Church, that in a plenary Council and Assembly, she may synodically determine Controversies. So that if a General Council have determin'd a Question, or expounded Scripture, we may no more disbelieve the Decree, than the Spirit of God himself who speaks in them. And indeed, if all Assemblies of Bishops were like that first, and all Bishops were of the same Spirit of which the Apostles were, I should obey their Decree with the same Religion as I do them whose Preface was *Visum est Spiritui Sancto & nobis*: And I doubt not but our blessed Saviour intended that the Assemblies of the Church should be judges of Controversies, and Guides of our persuasions in matters of difficulty. But he also intended they should proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and those precedents which he had made authentick by the immediate assistance of his holy Spirit: He hath done his part, but we do not do ours. And if any private Person in the simplicity and purity of his Souls desires to find out a truth of which he is in search and inquisition, if he prays for Wisdom, we have a promise he shall be heard and answered liberally, and therefore much more, when the representatives of the Catholick Church do meet, because every Person there hath *in individuo* a title to the promise, and another title as he is a governour and a guide of Souls, and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, especially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with simplicity and purity; so that

that there is no diſputing againſt the pretence and promiſes, and Authority of General Councils. For if any one Man can hope to be guided by Gods Spirit in the ſearch, the pious and impartial and unprejudicate ſearch of Truth, then much more may a General Council. If no private Man can hope for it, then truth is not neceſſary to be found, nor we are not oblig'd to ſearch for it, or elſe we are ſaved by chance: But if private Men can by vertue of a promiſe, upon certain conditions be aſſured of finding out ſufficient Truth, much more ſhall a General Council. So that I conſider thus: There are many promiſes pretended to belong to General Aſſemblies in the Church; but I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they ſhall be abſolutely aſſiſted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: Faith is a vertue as well as Charity, and therefore conſiſts in liberty and choice, and hath nothing in it of neceſſity: There is no Queſtion but that they are obliged to proceed according to ſome rule; for they expect no aſſiſtance by way of *Enthuſiaſm*; if they ſhould, I know no warrant for that, neither did any General Council ever offer a Decree which they did not think ſufficiently prov'd by Scripture, Reaſon, or Tradition, as appears in the Acts of the Councils; Now then, if they be tyed to conditions, it is their duty to obſerve them; but whether it be certain that they will obſerve them, that they will do all their duty, that they will not ſin even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that's the conſideration. So that if any Man queſtions the Title and Authority of General Councils, and whether or no great promiſes appertain to them, I ſuppoſe him to be
much

much mistaken; but he also that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reason, and that none of them were deceived, because possibly they might have been truly directed, is a stranger to the History of the Church, and to the perpetual instances and experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous saying of St. *Gregory* that he had the four first Councils in esteem and veneration next to the four Evangelists; I suppose it was because he did believe them to have proceeded according to Rule, and to have judged righteous judgement; but why had not he the same opinion of other Councils too which were celebrated before his death, for he lived after the fifth General? not because they had not the same Authority; for that which is warrant for one is warrant for all; but because he was not so confident that they did their duty nor proceeded so without interest as the first four had done, and the following Councils did never get that reputation which all the Catholick Church acknowledged due to the first four. And in the next Order were the three following generals; for the Greeks and Latins did never joyntly acknowledge but seven generals to have been authentick in any sense, because they were in no sense agreed that any more than seven had proceeded regularly and done their duty: So that now the Question is not whether General Councils have a promise that the holy Ghost will assist them; For every private Man hath that promise, that if he does his duty he shall be assisted sufficiently in order to that end to which he needs assistance; and therefore much more shall General Councils in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need assistance,
that

that is, in order to the conſervation of the Faith, for the doctrinal rules of good life, and all that concerns the eſſential duty of a Chriſtian, but not in deciding Questions to ſatisſie contentious or curious or preſumptuous Spirits. But now can the Biſhops ſo conven'd be factious, can they be abuſed with prejudice, or transported with intereſts, can they reſiſt the holy Ghoſt, can they extinguiſh the Spirit, can they ſtop their ears, and ſerve themſelves upon the holy Spirit and the pretence of his aſſiſtances, and ceaſe to ſerve him upon themſelves, by captivating their underſtandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it neceſſary they ſhould perform any condition? is there any one duty for them to perform in theſe Aſſemblies, a duty which they have power to do or not do? If ſo, then they may fail of it, and not do their duty. And if the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit be conditional, then we have no more aſſurance that they are aſſiſted, than that they do their duty and do not ſin.

Numb. 2. Now let us ſuppoſe what this duty is: Certainly, if the Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, muſt come to it by ſuch means which are ſpiritual and holy diſpoſitions, in order to a holy and ſpiritual end. They muſt be ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace, that is, they muſt have peaceable and docible diſpoſitions, nothing with them that is violent, and reſolute to encounter thoſe gentle and ſweet aſſiſtances: and the Rule they are to follow, is the Rule which the holy Spirit hath conſign'd to the Catholick Church, that is the holy Scripture, either * intirely or at leaſt for the greater part of the Rule: So that now if

* *Vid. Optat. Milev. lib. 5. adv. Parm. Balduin in eundem. & S. Auguſt. in Pf. 21. Expoſ. 2.*

the
perſu
tain
from
miſs
moſt
Coun
if a
if in
alſo
Pope
Scrip
requ
there
Auth
Coun
any
is th
woul
have
ges
concl
conv
trem
dom
Chur
of Bi
be bi
teſtim
extra
have
preſſ
um f
good
Fathe
Apoſt
iſtru

the

the Biſhops be factious and prepoſſeſt with perſuaſions depending upon intereſt, it is certain they may judge amiſs; and if they recede from the Rule, it is certain they do judge amiſs: And this I ſay upon their grounds who moſt advance the authority of General Councils: For if a General Council may err if a Pope confirm it not, then moſt certainly if in any thing it recede from Scripture it does alſo err; becauſe that they are to expect the Popes confirmation they offer to prove from Scripture: Now if the Pope's confirmation be required by authority of Scripture, and that therefore the default of it does evacuate the Authority of the Council, then alſo are the Councils Decrees invalid, if they recede from any other part of Scripture; So that Scripture is the Rule they are to follow, and a Man would have thought it had been needleſs to have proved it, but that we are fallen into Ages in which no truth is certain, no reaſon concluding, nor is there any thing that can convince ſome Men. For Stapleton with extreme boldneſs againſt the piety of Chriſtendom, againſt the publick ſenſe of the ancient Church, and the praſtiſe of all pious Aſſemblies of Biſhops affirms the Decrees of a Council to be binding, *etiamſi non confirmetur ne probabili teſtimonio Scripturarum*; nay, though it be quite extra Scripturam, but all wiſe and good Men have ever ſaid that ſenſe which St. Hilary expreſſed in theſe words, *Quæ extra Evangelium ſunt non defendam*; This was it which the good Emperour Conſtantine propounded to the Fathers met at Nice, *libri Evangelici, oracula Apoſtolorum, & veterum Prophetarum clarè nos inſtruunt quid ſentiendum in Divinis*, and this is

Relect. con-
trou. 4. q. 1.
4. 3.

L. 2. ad Con-
ſtant.

Apud Theo-
dor. 1. l. c. 7.

con-

Concord. Ca-
thol. l. 2. c. 10.

confessed by a sober Man of the Roman Church it self, the Cardinal of *Cusa*, *Oportet quod omnia talia quæ legere debent, contineantur in Authoritatibus sacrarum Scripturarum*: Now then all the advantage I shall take from hence, is this, that if the Apostles commended them who examined their Sermons by their conformity to the Law and the Prophets, and the Men of *Berea* were accounted noble for searching the Scriptures whether those things which they taught were so or no; I suppose it will not be denied, but the Councils Decrees, may also be tryed whether they be conform to Scripture yea or no; and although no Man can take cognisance and judge the Decrees of a Council *pro Autoritate publicâ*, yet *pro informatione privatâ* they may; the Authority of a Council is not greater than the Authority of the Apostles, nor their dictates more sacred or authentic. Now then put case a Council should recede from Scripture; whether or no were we bound to believe its Decrees? only ask the Question: For it were hard to be bound to believe what to our understandings seems contrary to that which we know to be the Word of God: But if we may lawfully recede from the Councils Decrees, in case they be contrariant to Scripture, it is all that I require in this Question. For if they be tyed to a Rule, then they are to be examined and understood according to the Rule, and then we are to give ourselves that liberty of judgment which is requisite to distinguish us from beasts, and to put us into a capacity of reasonable people, following reasonable guides. But how-ever if it be certain that the Councils are to follow Scripture, then if it be notorious that they do recede from
Scripture,

Scripture we are ſure we muſt obey God rather than Men, and then we are well enough. For unleſs we are bound to ſhut our Eyes, and not to look upon the Sun, if we may give our ſelves liberty to believe what ſeems moſt plain, and unleſs the Authority of a Council be ſo great a prejudice as to make us to do violence to our underſtanding, ſo as not to diſbelieve the Decree, becauſe it ſeems contrary to Scripture, but to believe it agrees with Scripture, though we know not how, therefore becauſe the Council hath decreed it, unleſs I ſay we be bound in duty to be ſo obediently blind, and ſottiſh, we are ſure that there are ſome Councils which are pretended General, that have retired from the publick notorious words and ſenſe of Scripture. For what wit of Man can reconcile the Decree of the thirteenth Seſſion of the Council of *Conſtance* with Scripture, in which Seſſion the half Communion was decreed, in defiance of Scripture, and with a *non obſtante* to Chriſts institution. For in the Preface of the Decree, Chriſts institution and the practice of the Primitive Church is expreſſed, and then with a *non obſtante*, Communion in one kind is eſtabliſht. Now then ſuppoſe the *non obſtante* in the form of words relates to the Primitive practice; yet ſince Chriſts institution was taken notice of in the firſt words of the Decree, and the Decree made quite contrary to it, let the *non obſtante* relate whither it will, the Decree (not to call it a defiance) is a plain reſeſſion from the institution of Chriſt, and therefore the *non obſtante* will refer to that without any ſenſible error; and indeed for all the excuſes to the contrary, the Decree was not ſo diſcreetly fram'd, but that in the very
form

form of words, the defiance and the *non obſtante* is too plainly relative to the firſt words. For what ſenſe can there be in the firſt *licet* elſe? *licet Chriſtus in utraque ſpecie*, and *licet Eccleſia Primitiva*, &c. *tamen hoc non obſtante*, &c. the firſt *licet* being a relative term, as well as the ſecond *licet*, muſt be bounded with ſome cor-
 reſpondent. But it matters not much; let them whom it concerns enjoy the benefit of all excuſes they can imagine, it is certain Chriſts inſtitution and the Councils ſanction are as contrary as light and darkneſs. Is it poſſible for any Man to contrive a way to make the Decree of the Council of *Trent*, commanding the publick Offices of the Church to be in Latin, friends with the fourteenth Chapter of the *Corinthians*? It is not amiſs to obſerve how the Hyperaſpiſts of that Council ſweat to answer the Allegations of St. *Paul*, and the wiſeſt of them do it ſo extremely poor, that it proclaims to all the World that the ſtrongeſt Man that is, cannot eat Iron or ſwallow a Rock. Now then, would it not be an unſpeakable Tyranny to all wiſe Perſons, (who as much hate to have their Souls enſlaved as their Bodies imprifoned) to command them to believe that theſe Decrees are agreeable to the Word of God? Upon whoſe underſtanding ſoever theſe are impoſed, they may at the next Seſſion reconcile them to a crime, and make any ſin ſacred, or perſuade him to believe propoſitions contradictory to a Mathematical demonſtration. All the arguments in the World that can be brought to prove the infallibility of Councils, cannot make it ſo certain that they are infallible, as theſe two inſtances do prove infallibly that theſe were deceived, and if ever we may ſafely make uſe of our reaſon and

conſider

conſider whether Councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reaſon be more aſſured, that they have or have not, than we have in theſe particulars: ſo that either our reaſon is of no manner of uſe, in the diſcuſſion of this Queſtion, and the thing it ſelf is not at all to be diſputed, or if it be, we are certain that theſe actually were deceived, and we muſt never hope for a clearer evidence in any diſpute. And if theſe be, others might have been, if they did as theſe did, that is, depart from their Rule. And it was wiſely ſaid of *Cuſanus*: *Notandum eſt experimento rerum univerſale Concilium poſſe deficere*: L. 2. c. 14. Concord. Cathol. The experience of it is notorious, that Councils have erred: And all the Arguments againſt experience are but plain ſophiſtry.

And therefore I make no ſcruple to ſlight Numb. 3. the Decrees of ſuch Councils, wherein the proceedings were as prejudicate and unreaſonable, as in the Council wherein *Abailardus* was condemned, where the preſidents having pronounced *Dammamus*, they at the lower end being awaked at the noiſe, heard the latter part of it, and concurred as far as *Mnamus* went, and that was as good as *Dammamus*, for if they had been awake at the pronouncing the whole word, they would have given ſentence accordingly. But by this means *St. Bernard* numbred the major part of voices againſt his Adverſary *Abailardus*: Epist. Abailardi ad Heliff. conjugem. And as far as theſe men did do their duty, the duty of Priests and Judges, and wiſe men; ſo we may preſume them to be aſſiſted: But no further. But I am content this (becauſe but a private Aſſembly) ſhall paſs for no inſtance: But what ſhall we ſay of all the Arrian Councils celebrated with ſo great fancy, and ſuch numerous Aſſemblies? we all ſay that they erred. And

L

it

*Conferens, l. 2.
cap. 25. Con-
cord.*

it will not be sufficient to say they were not law-ful Councils: For they were conven'd by that Authority which all the world knows did at that time convocate Councils, and by which (as it is * confessed and is notorious) the first eight Generals did meet, that is by the Authority of the Emperour all were called, and as many and more did come to them, than came to the most famous Council of *Nice*: So that the Councils were lawful, and if they did not proceed law-fully, and therefore did err, this is to say that Councils are then not deceiv'd, when they do their duty, when they judge impartially, when they decline interest, when they follow their Rule; but this says also that it is not infallibly certain that they will do so; for these did not, and therefore the others may be deceiv'd as well as these were. But another thing is in the wind; for Councils not confirmed by the Pope, have no warrant that they shall not err, and they not being confirmed, therefore fail'd. But whether is the Popes confirmation after the De-cree or before? It cannot be supposed before; for there is nothing to be confirmed till the De-cree be made, and the Article composed. But if it be after, then possibly the Popes Decree may be requisite in solemnity of Law, and to make the Authority popular, publick and hu-mane; but the Decree is true or false before the Popes confirmation, and is not at all altered by the supervening Decree, which being *postnate* to the Decree, alters not what went before, *Nunquam enim crescit ex post facto prateriti assermatio*, is the voice both of Law and Reason. So that it cannot make it divine, and necessary to be heartily believed. It may make it law-ful, not make it true, that is, it may possibly by

by such means become a Law but not a truth. I speak now upon supposition the Popes confirmation were necessary, and requir'd to the making of conciliary and necessary sanctions. But if it were, the case were very hard: For suppose a heresy should invade, and possess the Chair of *Rome*, what remedy can the Church have in that case, if a General Council be of no Authority without the Pope confirm it? will the Pope confirm a Council against himself; will he condemn his own heresy? That the Pope may be a Heretick appears in the * Canon Law, ^{• Dist. 40.} ^{Can. si Papa.} which says he may for heresy be deposed, and therefore by a Council which in this case hath plenary Authority without the Pope. And therefore in the Synod at *Rome* held under Pope *Adrian* the Second, the Censure of the Sixth Synod against *Honorius* who was convicted of heresy, is approved with this Appendix, that in this case the case of heresy, *minores possint de majoribus judicare*: And therefore if a Pope were above a Council, yet when the Question is concerning heresy, the case is altered; the Pope may be judg'd by his inferiours, who in this case which is the main case of all, become his Superiours. And it is little better than impudence to pretend that all Councils were confirmed by the Pope, or that there is a necessity in respect of divine obligation, that any should be confirmed by him, more than by another of the Patriarchs. For the Council of *Chalcedon* it self one of those four which St. *Gregory* did revere next to the four Evangelists, is rejected by Pope *Leo*, who in his 53 Epistle to *Anatolius*, and in his 54 to *Martian*, and in his 55 to *Pulcheria*, accuses it of ambition and inconsiderate temerity, and therefore no fit

De laicis, 13.
c. 20. §. ad hoc
lit.

Evang. lib. 3.
cap. 30.

Assembly for the habitation of the holy Spirit, and *Gelasius* in his Tome *de vinculo Anathematico*, affirms that the Council is in part to be receiv'd, in part to be reject'd, and compares it to heretical Books of a mixt matter, and proves his assertion by the place of *St. Paul*, *Omnia probate, quod bonum est retinete*. And *Bellarmino* says the same; *In Concilio Chalcedonensi quedam sunt bona, quedam mala, quedam recipienda, quedam rejicienda; ita & in libris hereticorum*, and if any thing be false, then all is Questionable, and judicable and discernable, and not infallible antecedently. And however, that Council hath *ex post facto*, and by the voluntary consenting of after Ages obtained great reputation; yet they that lived immediately after it, that observed all the circumstances of the thing, and the disabilities of the persons, and the uncertainty of the truth of its decrees, by reason of the uncludingness of the Arguments brought to attest it, were of another mind, *Quod autem ad Concilium Chalcedonense attinet, illud id temporis (viz. Anastasii Imp.) neque palam in Ecclesiis sanctissimis predicatum fuit, neque ab omnibus rejectum, nam singuli Ecclesiarum presides pro suo arbitratu in ea re egerunt*. And so did all men in the world that were not master'd with prejudices and undone in their understanding with accidental impertinencies; they judg'd upon those grounds which they had and saw, and suffered not themselves to be bound to the imperious dictates of other men, who are as uncertain in their determinations as other in their Questions. And it is an evidence that there is some deception, and notable error either in the thing or in the manner of their proceeding, when the Decrees of a Council shall have no authority from the Compilers,

plers, nor no ſtrength from the reaſonableneſs of the deciſion, but from the accidental approbation of Poſterity: And if Poſterity had pleaſed, *Origen* had believed well and been an Orthodox perſon. And it was pretty ſport to ſee that *Papias* was right for two Ages together, and wrong ever ſince; and juſt ſo it was in Councils, particularly in this of *Chalcedon*, that had a fate alterable according to the Age, and according to the Climate, which to my underſtanding is nothing elſe but an Argument that the buſineſs of infallibility is a later device, and commenc'd to ſerve ſuch ends as cannot be juſtified by true and ſubſtantial grounds, and that the Pope ſhould confirm it as of neceſſity, is a fit cover for the ſame diſh.

In the ſixth General Council, *Honorius* Pope Numb. 4. of *Rome* was condemned; did that Council ſtay for the Popes Confirmation before they ſent forth their Decree? Certainly they did not think it ſo needful, as that they would have ſuſpended or caſſated the Decree, in caſe the Pope had then diſavowed it: For beſides the condemnation of Pope *Honorius* for hereſy, the 13th and 55th Canons of that Council are expreſſy againſt the cuſtom of the Church of *Rome*. But this particular is involved in that new Queſtion, whether the Pope be above a Council. Now ſince the Conteſtation of this Queſtion, there was never any free or lawful Council that determin'd for the Pope, it is not likely any ſhould, and is it likely that any Pope will confirm a Council that does not? For the Council of *Baſil* is therefore condemn'd by the laſt Lateran which was an Aſſembly in the Popes own Palace, and the Council of *Conſtance* is of no value in this Queſtion, and ſlighted in a

*vid. poſtea de
Concil. Sinues
ſano. §. 6. N. 9.*

Epist. 16 . ad
Glorium.

juſt proportion, as that Article is diſbelieved. But I will not much trouble the Queſtion with a long conſideration of this particular ; the pretence is ſenſleſs and illiterate, againſt reaſon and experience, and already determin'd by St. *Auſtin* ſufficiently as to this particular, *Ecce putemus illos Episcopos qui Romæ judicaverunt non bonos judices fuiſſe, Reſtabat adhuc plenarium Eccleſiæ univerſa Concilium ubi etiam cum ipſis judicibus cauſa poſſit agitari, ut ſi male judicaſſe convicti eſſent, eorum ſententiæ ſolverentur.* For ſince Popes may be parties, may be Simoniacks, Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, it is againſt reaſon that in their own cauſes, they ſhould be judges, or that in any cauſes they ſhould be ſuperior to their judges. And as it is againſt reaſon, ſo is it againſt all experience too ; for the Council *Sinueſſanum* (as it ſaid) was conven'd to take Cogniſance of Pope *Marcellinus* ; and divers Councils were held at *Rome* to give judgment in the cauſes of *Damaſus*, *Sixtus* the III. *Symmachus*, and *Leo* III. and IV. as is to be ſeen in *Platina*, and the *Tomes* of the Councils. And it is no answer to this and the like allegations to ſay in matters of fact and humane conſtitution, the Pope may be judg'd by a Council, but in matters of Faith all the world muſt ſtand to the Popes determination and authoritative deciſion : For if the Pope can by any colour pretend to any thing, it is to a ſupreme Judicature in matters Eccleſiaſtical, poſitive and of fact ; and if he fails in this pretence, he will hardly hold up his head for any thing elſe ; for the ancient Biſhops deriv'd their Faith from the fountain, and held that in the higheſt tenure, even from Chriſt their Head ; but by reaſon of the Imperial * City it became the principal

* *Wile Council.*
Chalced. 22.
15.

principal Seat, and he ſurpriz'd the higheſt Judicature, partly by the conceſſion of others, partly by his own accidental advantages, and yet even in theſe things although he was *major ſingulis*, yet he was *minor univerſis*: And this is no more than what was decreed of the eighth General Synod; which if it be ſenſe, is pertinent to this Queſtion; for General Councils are appointed to take Cognizance, of Queſtions and differences about the Biſhop of Rome, *non tamen audacter in eum ferre ſententiam*: By *audacter*, as is ſuppoſed, is meant *præcipitanter* haſtily and unreaſonably; but if to give ſentence againſt him be wholly forbidden, it is non-ſenſe, for to what purpoſe is an Authority of taking Cognizance, if they have no power of giving ſentence, unleſs it were to defer it to a ſuperiour Judge, which in this caſe cannot be ſuppoſed? for either the Pope himſelf is to judge his own cauſe after their examination of him, or the General Council is to judge him: So that although the Council is by that Decree enjoyn'd to proceed modeſtly and warily, yet they may proceed to ſentence, or elſe the Decree is ridiculous and impertinent.

But to clear all, I will inſtance in matters of Queſtion and opinion: For not only ſome Councils have made their Decrees without or againſt the Pope, but ſome Councils have had the Popes confirmation, and yet have not been the more legitimate or obligatory, but are known to be heretical. For the Canons of the ſixth Synod although ſome of them were made againſt the Popes, and the cuſtom of the Church of Rome, a Pope a while after did confirm the Council, and yet the Canons are impious and heretical, and ſo eſteem'd by the

Church of *Rome* her self. I instance in the second Canon which approves of that Synod of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* for rebaptization of Hereticks, and the 72. Canon that dissolves marriage between persons of differing perswasion in matters of Christian Religion; and yet these Canons were approved by Pope *Adrian I.* who in his Epistle to *Tharastus*, which is in the second action of the seventh Synod, calls them *Canones divinè & legalitèr predicatos*. And these Canons were used by Pope *Nicholas I.* in his Epistle *ad Michaelem*, and by *Innocent III.* *c. à multis. extra. de atat. ordinandorum*: So that now (that we may apply this) there are seven General Councils which by the Church of *Rome* are condemn'd of error. The * Council of *Antioch*, *A. D.* 345. in which *St. Athanasius* was condemn'd: The Council of *Milain* *A. D.* 354. of above 300 Bishops: The Council of *Ariminum*, consisting of 600 Bishops: The second Council of *Ephesus*, *A. D.* 449. in which the *Eutychian* heresy was confirmed, and the Patriarch *Flavianus* kill'd by the faction of *Dioscorus*: The Council of *Constantinople* under *Leo Isaurus*, *A. D.* 730: And another at *Constantinople* 35 years after: And lastly, the Council at *Pisa* 134 years since. Now that these General Councils are condemn'd, is a sufficient Argument that Councils may err; and it is no answer to say they were not confirm'd by the Pope; for the Popes confirmation I have shewn not to be necessary, or if it were, yet even that also is an Argument that General Councils may become invalid, either by their own fault, or by some extrinfecal supervening accident, either of which evacuates their Authority; and whether all that is required to the

*Vid. Scera.
l. 2. c. 5. &
Sozomen. l. 3.
c. 5.

Gregor. in Ro.
gij. l. 3. caus. 7.
ait. Concilium
Numidia er-
rasse. Concili-
um Aquis-
gran. erravit.
De raptore &
raptâ dist. 20.
con. de libellis,
in glossâ.

the legitimation of a Council, was actually obſerved in any Council, is ſo hard to determine, that no man can be infallibly ſure that ſuch a Council is authentick and ſufficient probation.

2. And that is the ſecond thing I ſhall obſerve, There are ſo many Queſtions concerning the efficient, the form, the matter of General Councils, and their manner of proceeding, and their final ſanction, that after a Queſtion is determin'd by a Conciliary Aſſembly, there are perhaps twenty more Queſtions to be diſputed before we can with confidence either believe the Council upon its meer Authority, or obtrude it upon others. And upon this ground, how eaſy it is to elude the preſſure of an Argument drawn from the Authority of a General Council, is very remarkable in the Queſtion about the Popes or the Councils Superiority, which Queſtion although it be defin'd for the Council againſt the Pope by five General Councils, the Council of *Florence*, of *Conſtance*, of *Baſil*, of *Piſa*, and one of the *Lateran's*, yet the Jeſuits to this day, account this Queſtion *pro non definitâ*, and have rare pretences for their eſcape; as firſt, It is true a Council is above a Pope, in caſe there be no Pope, or he uncertain; which is *Bellarmino's* answer, never conſidering whether he ſpoke ſenſe or no, nor yet remembring that the Council of *Baſil* depoſed *Eugenius* who was a true Pope and ſo acknowledg'd. Secondly, ſometimes the Pope did not confirm theſe Councils, that's their Answer: (And although it was an exception that the Fathers never thought of, when they were preſſed with the Authority of the Council of *Ariminum* or *Syrminum*, or any other *Arrian* Convention;) yet the Council of *Baſil* was conven'd

Numb. 6.

1.

2.

- conven'd by Pope *Martin V.* then, in its ſixteenth Seſſion, declar'd by *Eugenius* the IV. to be lawfully continued and confirmed expreſſy in ſome of its Decrees by Pope *Nicholas*, and ſtood till it was at laſt rejected by *Leo X.* very many years after; but that came too late, and with too viſible an intereſt; and this Council did decree *fide Catholicâ tenendum Concilium eſſe ſuprà Papam*: But if one Pope confirms it, and another rejects it, as it happened in this caſe and in many more, does it not deſtroy the competency of the Authority? and we ſee it by this inſtance, that it ſo ſerves the turns of men, that it is good in ſome caſes, that is, when it makes for them, and invalid when it makes againſt them. Thirdly, but it is a little more ridiculous in the caſe of the Council of *Conſtance*, whoſe decrees were confirm'd by *Martin V.* But that this may be no Argument againſt them, *Bellarmino* tells you he only confirmed thoſe things *quæ facta fuerant Conciliaritèr, re diligenter examinatâ*, of which there being no mark, nor any certain Rule to judge it, it is a device that may evacuate any thing we have a mind to, it was not done *Conciliaritèr*, that is, not according to our mind; for *Conciliaritèr* is a fine new nothing, that may ſignifie what you pleaſe. Fourthly, but other devices yet more pretty they have: As, whether the Council of *Lateran* was a General Council or no, they know not, (no nor will not know) which is a wiſe and plain reſervation of their own advantages, to make it General or not General, as ſhall ſerve their turns. Fifthly, as for the Council of *Florence*, they are not ſure, whether it hath defin'd the Queſtion *ſatis apertè*; *apertè* they will grant, if you will allow them not *ſatis apertè*. Sixthly

Sixthly and laſtly, the Council of *Piſa* is *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*, which is the greateſt folly of all and moſt prodigious vanity; ſo that by ſomething or other, either they were not conven'd lawfully, or they did not proceed *Conciliariter*, or 'tis not certain that the Council was General or no, or whether the Council were *approbatum*, or *reprobatum*, or elſe it is *partim confirmatum partim reprobatum*, or elſe it is *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*; By one of theſe ways or a device like to theſe, all Councils and all Decrees ſhall be made to ſignifie nothing, and to have no Authority.

6.
Bellar. de
conc. l. i. c. 8

3. There is no General Council that hath determined that a General Council is infallible: No Scripture hath recorded it; no Tradition univerſal hath tranſmitted to us any ſuch propoſition; So that we muſt receive the Authority at a lower rate, and upon a leſs probability than the things conſigned by that Authority. And it is ſtrange that the Decrees of Councils ſhould be eſteemed authentick and infallible, and yet it is not infallibly certain, that the Councils themſelves are infallible, becauſe the belief of the Councils infallibility is not proved to us by any medium, but ſuch as may deceive us.

Numb. 7.

4. But the beſt inſtance that Councils are ſome and may all be deceived, is the contradiction of one Council to another; for in that caſe both cannot be true, and which of them is true, muſt belong to another judgment, which is leſs than the ſolemnity of a General Council; and the determination of this matter can be of no greater certainty after it is concluded, than when it was propounded as a Queſtion, being it is to be determined by the ſame Authority or

Numb. 8.

by

Sess. 25.

Aff. 2.

Can. 82.

Cap. 1.

L. 17. de cul.
Dei. c. 20.

by a leſs than it ſelf. But for this allegation, we cannot want inſtances; The Council of *Trent* allows picturing of God the Father; The Council of *Nice* altogether diſallows it; The ſame *Nicene* Council, which was the ſeventh General, allows of picturing Chriſt in the form of a Lamb; But the ſixth Synod by no means will endure it, as *Caranza* affirms: The Council of *Neocaſarea* confirmed by *Leo IV*, diſt. 20. *de libellis*, and approved by the firſt *Nicene* Council as it is ſaid in the ſeventh Session of the Council of *Florence*, forbids ſecond Marriages, and impoſes Penances on them that are married the ſecond time, forbidding Priests to be preſent at ſuch Marriage Feaſts: Beſides, that this is expreſſy againſt the Doctrin of *St. Paul*, it is alſo againſt the Doctrin of the Council of *Laodicea* which took off ſuch Penances, and pronounced ſecond Marriages to be free and lawful: Nothing is more diſcrepant than the third Council of *Carthage* and the Council of *Laodicea*, about aſſignation of the Canon of Scripture, and yet the ſixth General Synod approves both: And I would fain know if all General Councils are of the ſame mind with the Fathers of the Council of *Carthage*, who reckon into the Canon five Books of *Solomon*. I am ſure *St. Auſtin* reckoned but three, and I think all Chriſtendom beſide are of the ſame opinion. And if we look into the title of the Law *de Conciliis*, called *Concordantia diſcordantium*, we ſhall find inſtances enough to confirm that the Decrees of ſome Councils are contradictory to others, and that no wit can reconcile them: And whether they did or no, that they might diſagree, and former Councils be corrected by later, was the belief of the Doctors

in

in thoſe Ages in which the beſt and moſt famous Councils were conven'd, as appears in that famous ſaying of St. *Auſtin* ſpeaking concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks; and how much the *Africans* were deceived in that Queſtion, he answers the Alligation of the Biſhops Letters, and thoſe National Councils which confirmed St. *Cyprian*'s opinion by ſaying that they were no final determination. For *Episcoporum literæ emendari poſſunt à Conciliis nationalibus, Concilia nationalia à plenariis, ipſaque plenaria priora à poſterioribus emendari.* Not only the occaſion of the Queſtion being a matter not of fact, but of Faith, as being inſtanc'd in the Queſtion of rebaptization: but alſo the very fabrick and œconomy of the words, put by all the answers of thoſe men who think themſelves preſſed with the Authority of St. *Auſtin*. For as National Councils may correct the Biſhops Letters, and General Councils may correct National, ſo the later General may correct the former, that is, have contrary and better Decrees of manners, and better determinations in matters of Faith. And from hence hath riſen a Queſtion whether is to be received the former or the later Councils, in caſe they contradict each other. The former are nearer the fountains Apoſtolical, the later are of greater conſideration; The firſt, have more Authority, the later more reaſon; The firſt are more venerable, the later more inquisitive and ſeeing. And now what rule ſhall we have to determine our beliefs, whether to Authority, or Reaſon, the Reaſon and the Authority both of them not being the higheſt in their kind, both of them being repudiable, and at moſt but probable? And here it is that this great uncertainty is ſuch
as

L. 2. de Conc.
c. 8. *Reſpon-*
deo in primis.

* *Ibid.* § de
Concilio au-
tem.
Diſt. 20. Can.
Domino San-
cto.

Numb. 9.

as not to determine any body, but fit to ſerve every body; and it is ſport to ſee that *Bellar- mine* will by all means have the Council of *Carthage* preferr'd before the Council of *Laodicea*, becauſe it is later, and yet he prefers the ſecond *Nicene* * Council before the Council of *Frankfurt*, becauſe it is elder: *St. Auſtin* would have the former Generals to be mended by the later, but *Iſidore* in *Gratian* ſays when Councils do differ *ſtandum eſſe antiquioribus*, the elder muſt carry it: And indeed theſe probables are buſkins to ſerve every foot, and they are like *magnum & parvum*, they have nothing of their own, all that they have is in compariſon of others; ſo theſe topicks have nothing of reſolute and dogmatical truth, but in relation to ſuch ends as an intereſted perſon hath a mind to ſerve upon them.

5. There are many Councils corrupted, and many pretended and alledged, when there were no ſuch things, both which make the topick of the Authority of Councils to be little and inconfiderable: There is a Council brought to light in the edition of Councils by *Binius*, viz. *Sinuſſanum*, pretended to be kept in the year 303, but it was ſo private till then, that we find no mention of it in any ancient Record: Neither *Euſebius*, nor *Ruffinus*, *St. Hierom*, nor *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, nor *Theodoret*, nor *Eutropius*, nor *Bede* knew any thing of it, and the eldeſt allegation of it is by Pope *Nicholas I.* in the ninth Century. And he that ſhall conſider that 300 Biſhops in the miſt of horrid Perſecutions (for ſo then they were) are pretended to have conven'd, will need no greater Argument to ſuſpect the impoſture; beſides, he that was the framer of the engine did not lay his ends together hand-

handſomly, for it is ſaid that the depoſition of *Marcellinus* by the Synod was told to *Diocletian*, when he was in the *Persian* War, when as it is known before that time he had return'd to *Rome* and triumph'd for his *Persian* Conqueſt as *Eusebius* in his Chronicle reports: And this is ſo plain that *Binius* and *Baronius* pretend the Text to be corrupted, and to go to * mend it by ſuch an emendation as is a plain contradiction to the ſenſe, and that ſo un-clerk-like, viz. by putting in two words and leaving out one, which whether it may be allowed them by any licence leſs than Poetical let Criticks judge. *St. Gregory* ſaith that the *Conſtantinopolitans* had corrupted the Synod of *Chalcedon*, and that he ſuſpected the ſame concerning the *Ephesine* Council: And in the fifth Synod there was a notorious prevarication, for there were falſe Epistles of Pope *Vigilius* and *Menna* the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* inſerted, and ſo they paſſed for authentick till they were diſcovered in the ſixth General Synod, Actions the 12. and 14. And not only falſe Decrees and Actions may creep into the Codes of Councils; but ſometimes the authority of a learned man may abuſe the Church with pretended Decrees, of which there is no Copy or ſhadow in the Code it ſelf: And thus *Thomas Aquinas* ſays that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was reckoned in the Canon by the *Nicene* Council, no ſhadow of which appears in thoſe Copies we now have of it; and this pretence and the reputation of the man prevail'd ſo far with *Melchior Canus* the learned Biſhop of *Canaries*, that he believed it upon this ground, *Vir ſanctus rem adeo gravem non aſtrueret, niſi compertum habuiſſet*; and there are many things which have prevailed upon leſs

reason

Pro ſcum
eſſet in bello
Perſarum] lo-

gi volunt ſcum
reverſus eſſet
bello Perſa-
rum] Euseb.

Chronicon, vi-
de Binius in
notis ad Con-
cil. Sinueſſa-
num. Tom. 1.

Concil. &
Baron. An-
nal. Tom. 3.
A. D. 303.
num. 107.

L. 3. Ep. 14.
ad Neſerum.

Comment. in
Hebr.

* *Con. Carthag.*
VI. cap. 9.

† *Con. Afri-*
can.

¶ *Ibid.* c. 102.
c. 133.

* *Lib. 1. Eccl.*
Hiſt. c. 6.

† *In princ.*
Con. de Synod.
Erinc.

¶ *Baronius,*
tom. 3. A.D.
325. n. 156.
Tom. 3. ad
A.D. 325. n.
62, 63.

* *Pampl.* 1. 2.
c. 6.

reaſon and a more ſlight Authority. And that very Council of *Nice*, hath not only been pretended by *Aquinas*, but very much abuſed by others, and its Authority and great reputation hath made it more lyable to the fraud and pretences of idle people: For whereas the *Nicene* Fathers made but twenty Canons, for ſo many and no more were received by * *Cecilian* of *Carthage*, that was at *Nice* in the Council; by St. † *Auſtin*, and 200 *African* Biſhops with him, by St. ¶ *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, by * *Atticus* of *Conſtantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, † *Iſidore* and *Theodoret*, as ¶ *Baronius* witneſſes, yet there are fourſcore lately found out in an *Arabian* M.S. and publiſhed in Latin by *Turrian* and *Alfonſus* of *Piſa* Jeſuits ſurely, and like to be maſters of the mint. And not only the Canons, but the very Acts of the *Nicene* Council are falſe and ſpurious, and are ſo confeſſed by *Baronius*; though how he and * *Lindanus* will be reconcil'd upon the point, I neither know well nor much care. Now if one Council be corrupted, we ſee by the inſtance of St. *Gregory*, that another may be ſuſpected and ſo all; becauſe he found the Council of *Chalcedon* corrupted, he ſuſpected alſo the *Ephesine*, and another might have ſuſpected more, for the *Nicene* was tampered foully with, and ſo three of the four Generals were fullied and made ſuſpicious, and therefore we could not be ſecure of any; If falſe Acts be inſerted in one Council, who can truſt the actions of any, unleſs he had the keeping the Records himſelf, or durſt ſwear for the Register: And if a very learned man (as *Thomas Aquinas* was,) did either wilfully deceive us, or was himſelf ignorantly abuſed in Allegation of a Canon which was not, it is but a

very

very
holy
the w
6.
inſtan
partic
Gene
either
the C
were
Toled
a Con
this C
Epiſt
ſays t
wife
daubi
it was
Wive
legal
ed t
unlav
And
ful V
shoul
migh
ſuppo
Chri
with
Virg
So th
with
it, t
ſenſe
that
pra
endu

very fallible Topick at the beſt, and the moſt holy man that is, may be abuſed himſelf, and the wiſeſt may deceive others.

6. And laſtly, To all this and to the former *Numb. 10.* inſtances, by way of Corollary, I add ſome more particulars in which it is notorious that Councils General, and National, that is, ſuch as were either General by Original, or by adoption into the Canon of the Catholick Church did err, and were actually deceived. The firſt Council of Toledo admits to the Communion him that hath a Concubine, ſo he have no wife beſides, and this Council is approved by Pope *Leo* in the 92 Epistle to *Ruficus* Biſhop of *Narbona*: *Gratian* *Dist. 34. can. 1.* ſays that the Council means by a Concubine, a wife married *ſine dote & ſolemnitate*; but this is daubing with untempered mortar. For though it was a cuſtom amongſt the Jews to diſtinguiſh Wives from their Concubines by Dowry and legal Solemnities, yet the Chriſtian diſtinguiſhed them no otherwiſe, than as lawful and unlawful, than as Chſtity and Fornication: And beſides, if by a Concubine is meant a lawful Wife without a Dowry, to what purpoſe ſhould the Council make a Law that ſuch a one might be admitted to the Communion? for I ſuppoſe it was never thought to be a Law of Chriſtianity that a man ſhould have a Portion with his Wife, nor he that married a poor Virgin ſhould deſerve to be Excommunicate. So that *Gratian* and his Followers are preſt ſo with this Canon, that to avoid the impiety of it, they expound it to a ſignification without ſenſe or purpoſe. But the buſineſs then was, that Adultery was ſo publick and notorious a practice that the Council did chuſe rather to endure ſimple Fornication, than by ſuch per-

Cap. 3.

^o Part. 3. q. 80.
2. 6. ad 3 m.

† Can. 72.

|| Can. ego
Berengar. de
conſecrat. diſt.
2.

Lib. 2. c. 8.
de Concil.

miſſion of a leſs, they might ſlacken, the publick cuſtom of a greater, juſt as at *Rome* they permit Stews to prevent unnatural ſins; but that by a publick ſanction Fornicators, habitually and notoriously ſuch, ſhould be admitted to the holy Communion was an act of Priests, ſo unfit for Priests, that no excuſe can make it white or clean. The Council of *Wormes* does authorize a ſuperſtitious cuſtom at that time too much uſed, of diſcovering ſtolen goods by the holy Sacrament, which * *Aquinas* juſtly condemns for Superſtition. The † ſixth Synod ſeparates perſons lawfully married upon an accuſation and crime of heresy: The Roman Council under || Pope *Nicholas II.* defined that not only the Sacrament of Chriſts body, but the very body it ſelf of our bleſſed Saviour is handled and broke by the hands of the Priest, and chewed by the teeth of the Communicants, which is a manifeſt error derogatory from the truth of Chriſts beatifical reſurrection, and glorification in the Heavens, and diſavowed by the Church of *Rome* it ſelf; But *Bellarmino* that answers all the Arguments in the world, whether it be poſſible or not poſſible, would ſain make the matter fair, and the Decree tolerable, for ſays he, the Decree means that the body is broken not in it ſelf but in the ſign, and yet the Decree ſays that not only the Sacrament (which if any thing be, is certainly the ſign) but the very body it ſelf is broken and champ'd with hands and teeth reſpectively; which indeed was nothing but a plain over-acting the Article in contradiction to *Berengarius*. And the answer of *Bellarmino* is not ſenſe; for he denies that the body it ſelf is broken in it ſelf (that was the error we charg'd upon the

Roman

Roman Synod) and the ſign abſtracting from the body is not broken, (for that was the opinion that Council condemn'd in *Berengarius*) but ſays *Bellarmino*, the body in the ſign: What's that? for neither the ſign, nor the body, nor both together are broken: For if either of them diſtinctly, they either ruſh upon the error which the Roman Synod condemn'd in *Berengarius*, or upon that which they would fain excuſe in Pope *Nicholas*; but if both are broken then 'tis true to affirm it of either, and then the Council is blaſphemous in ſaying that Chriſt's glorified body is paſſible and frangible by natural manducation: So that it is and it is not, it is not this way, and yet it is no way elſe, but it is ſome way, and they know not how, and the Council ſpoke blaſphemy, but it muſt be made innocent; and therefore, it was requiſite a cloud of a diſtinction ſhould be raiſed, that the unwary Reader might be amuſed, and the Decree ſcape untoucht; but the truth is, they that undertake to juſtify all that other men ſay, muſt be more ſubtle than they that ſaid it, and muſt uſe ſuch diſtinctions which poſſibly the firſt Authors did not underſtand. But I will multiply no more inſtances, for what inſtance ſoever I ſhall bring, ſome or other will be answering it, which thing is ſo far from ſatisfying me in the particulars, that it increaſes the difficulty in the general, and ſatiſfies me in my firſt belief: For * if no Decrees of Councils can make againſt them, though they ſeem never ſo plain againſt them, then let others be allowed the ſame liberty, (and there is all the reaſon in the world they ſhould) and no Decree ſhall conclude againſt any Doctrine, that they have already entertained: and by this means the Church is no

* Illa demon-
eis videntur
edicta & Con-
cilia que in
rem ſuam ſa-
ciunt, reliqua
non plerumque
munt quam
conventum
muliercularum
in re-
rum celſitudi-
nis. Lud.
vives in
Scholiis lib.
20. Aug. de
Civ. Dei
c. 26.

fitter instrument to Decree Controversies than the Scripture it self, there being as much obscurity and disputing in the sense, and the manner, and the degree, and the competency, and the obligation of the Decree of a Council, as of a place of Scripture. And what are we the nearer for a Decree, if any Sophister shall think his elusion enough to contest against the Authority of a Council? yet this they do, that pretend highest for their Authority, which consideration or some like it might possibly make *Gratian* prefer *St. Hierom's* single Testimony before a whole Council, because he had Scripture of his side; which says, that the Authority of Councils is not *αὐτοῖς* &, and that Councils may possibly recede from their Rule, from Scripture; and in that case, a single person proceeding according to Rule is a better Argument; which indeed was the saying of

36. q. 2. c.
placuit.

Part. 1. de election. Et elect. potest. cap. significasti.
Panormitan, in concernentibus fidem etiam dictum unius privati esset dicto Papæ aut totius Concilii preferendum, si ille moveretur melioribus Argumentis.

Numb. 11. I end this Discourse with representing the words of *Gregory Nazianzen* in his Epistle to *Procopius*; *Ego si vera scribere oportet ita animo affectus sum, ut omnia Episcoporum Concilia fugi-am, quoniam nullius Concilii finem latum faustum-que vidi, nec quod depulsionem malorum potius quam accessionem & incrementum habuerit*: But I will not be so severe and dogmatical against them: For I believe many Councils to have been called with sufficient Authority, to have been managed with singular piety and prudence, and to have been finished with admirable success and truth. And where we find such Councils, he that will not with all veneration believe their

Athanas. lib. de Synod.

Frustra igitur circumcurstantes pratextant ob fidem se Synodes postulare, cum sit Divina Scriptura omnibus potentior.

Decrees,

Decrees, and receive their ſanctions, underſtands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our Souls, whoſe *faith we are* Heb. 13. 7. *bound to follow* (ſaith St. Paul) that is ſo long as they follow Chriſt, and certainly many Councils have done ſo : But this was then when the publick intereſt of Chriſtendom was better conſerv'd in determining a true Article, than in finding a diſcreet temper, or a wiſe expedient to ſatisſie diſagreeing perſons ; (As the Fathers at *Trent* did, and the *Lutherans* and *Calviniſts* did at *Sendomir* in *Polonia* ; and the *Sublapſarians* and *Supralapſarians* did at *Dort* :) It was in Ages when the ſum of Religion did not conſiſt in maintaining the *Grandezza* of the Papacy ; where there was no order of men with a fourth Vow upon them to advance St. *Peter's* Chair ; when there was no man, nor any company of men, that eſteem'd themſelves infallible, and therefore they ſearched for truth as if they meant to find it, and would believe it if they could ſee it prov'd, not reſolv'd to prove it becauſe they had upon chance or intereſt believ'd it ; then they had rather have ſpoken a truth, then upheld their reputation, but only in order to truth. This was done ſometimes, and when it was done, God's Spirit never fail'd them, but gave them ſuch aſſiſtances as were ſufficient to that good end for which they were Aſſembled, and did implore his aid : And therefore it is that the four general Councils ſo called by way of eminency have gained ſo great a reputation above all others, not becauſe they had a better promiſe, or more ſpecial aſſiſtances, but becauſe they proceeded better according to the Rule, with leſs faction, without ambition and temporal ends.

Numb. 12.

And yet thoſe very Aſſemblies of Biſhops had no Authority by their Decrees to make a Divine Faith, or to conſtitute new objects of neceſſary Credence; they made nothing true that was not ſo before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent Guides, and whoſe Decrees are moſt certainly to determine all thoſe who have no Argument to the contrary of greater force and efficacy than the Authority or Reaſons of the Council. And there is a duty owing to every Pariſh-Prieſt, and to every Dioceſan Biſhop; theſe are appointed over us and to answer for our Souls, and are therefore morally to guide us, as reaſonable Creatures are to be guided, that is, by reaſon and diſcourſe: For in things of judgment and underſtanding, they are but in form next above Beaſts, that are to be ruled by the imperiouſneſs and abſoluteneſs of Authority, unleſs the Authority be Divine, that is, infallible. Now then in a juſter height, but ſtill in its true proportion, Aſſemblies of Biſhops are to guide us with a higher Authority, becauſe in reaſon it is ſuppoſed they will do it better, with more Argument and certainty, and with Decrees, which have the advantage by being the reſults of many diſcourſes of very wiſe and good men: But that the Authority of general Councils, was never eſteem'd abſolute, infallible and unlimited, appears in this, that before they were obliging, it was neceſſary that each particular Church reſpectively ſhould accept them, *Con-*

Vid S. Auguſt. l. 1. c. 18. de bapt. contr. Donat. *currente univerſali totius Eccleſiæ conſenſu, &c. in declaratione veritatum quæ credendæ ſunt, &c.* That's the way of making the Decrees of Councils become authentick, and be turn'd into a Law as *Gerſon* obſerves; and till they did, their Decrees

Decrees were but a dead letter (and therefore it is that these later Popes have so laboured, that the Council of *Trent* should be received in *France*; and *Carolus Molineus* a great Lawyer, and of the Roman Communion disputed * against the reception,) and this is a known condition in the Canon Law, but it proves plainly that the Decrees of Councils have their Authority from the voluntary submission of the particular Churches, not from the prime sanction and constitution of the Council. And there is great reason it should; for as the representative body of the Church derives all power from the diffusive body which is represented, so it resolves into it, and though it may have all the legal power, yet it hath not all the natural; for more able men may be unsent, than sent; and they who are sent may be wrought upon by stratagem, which cannot happen to the whole diffusive Church; it is therefore most fit that since the legal power, that is, the external was passed over to the body representative, yet the efficacy of it, and the internal should so still remain in the diffusive, as to have power to consider whether their representatives did their duty yea or no, and so to proceed accordingly: For unless it be in matters of justice, in which the interest of a third person is concerned, no man will or can be supposed to pass away all power from himself of doing himself right, in matters personal, proper, and of so high concernment: It is most unnatural and unreasonable. But besides, that they are excellent instruments of peace, the best humane Judicatories in the world, rare Sermons for the determining a point in Controversie, and

* So did the third Estate of *France* in the Convention of the three Estates under *Levies* the 13th earnestly contend against it.

the greatest probability from humane Authority, besides these advantages (I say) I know nothing greater that General Councils can pretend to with reason and Argument sufficient to satisfy any wise man: And as there was never any Council so general, but it might have been more general; for in respect of the whole Church, even *Nice* it self was but a small Assembly; so there is no Decree so well constituted, but it may be proved by an Argument higher than the Authority of the Council: And therefore general Councils, and National, and Provincial, and Diocesan in their several degrees, are excellent Guides for the Prophets and directions and instructions for their Prophesying, but not of Weight and Authority to restrain their Liberty so wholly, but that they may dissent when they see a reason strong enough so to persuade them, as to be willing upon the confidence of that reason and their own sincerity, to answer to God for such their modesty, and peaceable, but (as they believe) their necessary disagreeing.

SECT.

S E C T. VII.

Of the fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his Expounding Scripture, and reſolving Questions.

BUT ſince the Queſtion between the Council and the Pope grew high, they have not wanted abettors ſo confident on the Popes behalf, as to believe General Councils to be nothing but Pumps and Solemnities of the Catholick Church, and that all the Authority of determining Controverſies is formally and effectually in the Pope. And therefore to appeal from the Pope to a future Council is a heresy, yea, and Treason too ſaid Pope *Pius II.* and therefore it concerns us now to be wiſe and wary. But before I proceed, I muſt needs remember that Pope *Pius II.* while he was the wiſe and learned *Aeneas Sylvius*, was very confident for the preheminance of a Council, and gave a merry reaſon why more Clerks were for the Popes than the Council, though the truth was on the other ſide, even becauſe the Pope gives Biſhopricks and Abbeys, but Councils give none; and yet as ſoon as he was made Pope, as if he had been inſpired, his Eyes were open to ſee the great privileges of St. *Peter's* Chair, which before he could not ſee, being amused with the truth, or elſe with the reputation of a General Council. But however, there are many that hope to make it good, that the Pope is the Universal and the infallible Doctor, that he breaths Decrees as Oracles, that to diſſent from any of his Cathedral determinations is abſolute heresy, the

Rule

Numb. 1.

Epist. ad Norimberg.

Patrum & a-
vrum nostro-
rum tempera
pauci aude-
bant dicere
Papam eſſe
ſupra Concil.
l. i. de geſtis
Concil. Baſil.

Rule of Faith being nothing else but conformity to the Chair of *Peter*. So that here we have met a restraint of Prophecy indeed; but yet to make amends, I hope we shall have an infallible Guide, and when a Man is in Heaven, he will never complain that his choice is taken from him, and he is confin'd to love and to admire, since his love and his admiration is fixt, upon that which makes him happy, even upon God himself. And in the Church of *Rome* there is in a lower degree, but in a true proportion as little cause to be troubled, that we are confin'd to believe just so, and no choice left us for our understandings to discover or our wills to chuse, because though we be limited, yet we are pointed out where we ought to rest, we are confin'd to our Center, and there where our understandings will be satisfied, and therefore will be quiet, and where after all our strivings, studies and endeavours we desire to come, that is, to truth, for there we are secur'd to find it, because we have a Guide that is infallible: If this prove true, we are well enough. But if it be false or uncertain, it were better we had still kept our liberty, than be cozened out of it with gay pretences. This then we must consider.

Numb. 2.

And here we shall be oppressed with a cloud of Witnesses: For what more plain than the Commission given to *Peter*? *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church. And to thee will I give the Keys. And again, for thee have I prayed that thy faith fail not; but thou when thou art converted confirm thy brethren; And again, If thou lovest me feed my sheep:* Now nothing of this being spoken to any of the other Apostles, by one of these places. *St. Peter* must needs be appointed Foundation or Head of the

the Church, and by conſequence he is to rule and govern all. By ſome other of theſe places he is made the ſupreme Paſtor, and he is to teach and determine all, and enabled with an infallible power ſo to do: And in a right underſtanding of theſe Authorities, the Fathers ſpake great things of the Chair of *Peter*; for we are as much bound to believe that all this was ſpoken to *Peter's* Succeſſors, as to his Perſon; that muſt by all means be ſuppoſed, and ſo did the old Doctors who had as much certainty of it, as we have, and no more; but yet let us hear what they have ſaid, * *To this Church by reaſon of its more* powerful principality, *it is neceſſary all Churches round about ſhould Convene: In this, Tradition Apoſtolicall always was obſerved, and therefore to communicate with this Biſhop, with this Church, was to be in Communion with the Church Catholick:* || *To this Church error or perfidiouſneſs cannot have acceſs:* * *Againſt this See the gates of Hell cannot prevail:* † *For we know this Church to be built upon a Rock: And whoever eats the Lamb not within this Houſe, is prophane; he that is not in the Ark of Noah periſhes in the inundation of waters. He that gathers not with this Biſhop he ſcatters; and he that belongeth not to Chriſt, muſt needs belong to Antichriſt. And that's his final ſentence: But if you would have all this prov'd by an infallible Argument, || Optatus of Milevis in Affrica ſupplies it to us from the very name of Peter: For therefore Chriſt give him the cognomination of Cephias ἀπὸ τοῦ κεφαλῆς, to ſhew that St. Peter was the viſible Head of the Catholick Church. Dignum patellâ operculum! This long harangue muſt needs be full of tragedy to all them that take liberty to themſelves to follow Scripture and their beſt Guides, if it happens*

* Irenæ. contr. hæref. l. 3. c. 3

† Ambr. de obitu Salyri. c. 1. 1. Ep. 4. ad Imp. Cypr. Ep. 52.

|| Cypr. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.

* S. Auſtin. in Pſal. contra part. Donat.

† Hieron. Ep. 57. ad Damasum.

|| L. 2. contra Parmenian.

in

in that liberty that they depart from the perſuaſions or the Communion of *Rome*: But indeed, if with the peace of the Biſhops of *Rome*, I may ſay it, this Scene is the moſt unhandſomely laid, and the worſt carried of any of thoſe pretences that have lately abuſed Chriſtendom.

Numb. 3.

1. Againſt the Allegations of Scripture, I ſhall lay no greater prejudice than this, that if a perſon diſ-intereſted ſhould ſee them, and conſider what the products of them might poſſibly be, the laſt thing that he would think of, would be how that any of theſe places ſhould ſerve the ends or pretences of the Church of *Rome*: For to inſtance in one of the particulars, that man had need have a ſtrong fancy who imagines, that becauſe Chriſt pray'd for *St. Peter*, that (being he had deſign'd him to be one of thoſe upon whoſe preaching and Doctrines he did mean to conſtitute a Church) *that his faith might not fail*, (for it was neceſſary that no bitterness or ſtopping, ſhould be in one of the firſt ſprings, leaſt the current be either ſpoil'd or obſtructed) that therefore the faith of Pope *Alexander VI*, or *Gregory*, or *Clement* 1500 years after, ſhould be preſerved by vertue of that Prayer, which the form of words, the time, the occaſion, the manner of the addreſs, the effect it ſelf, and all the circumſtances of the action and perſon did determine to be perſonal: and when it was more than perſonal, *St. Peter* did not repreſent his Succeſſors at *Rome*; but the whole Catholick Church, ſays *Aquinas* and the Divines of the University of *Paris*, *Volunt enim pro ſolâ Eccleſiâ eſſe oratum*, ſays *Bellarmino* of them, and the gloſs upon the Canon Law plainly denies the effect of this Prayer at all to appertain to the Pope:

22 a. q. 2. a. 6.

ar. 6. ad 3 m.

L. 4. de Rom.

Pont. c. 3. §. 1.

Quare

Quare de quâ Ecclesia intelligas quod hoc dicitur
quod non possit errare, si de ipso Papâ qui Ecclesia
dicitur? sed certum est quod Papa errare potest

*Caus. 21. cap.
à recta. q. 1.*

Respondeo ipsa Congregatio fidelium hic dicitur Ec-
clesia, & talis Ecclesia non potest non esse, nam ip-
se Dominus orat pro Ecclesiâ, & voluntate labiorum
suorum non fraudabitur.

*29. dist. Ana-
statius. 60. di.
si Papa.*

But there is a little danger in this Argument when we well consider it; but it is likely to redound on the head of those whose turns it should serve: For it may be remembered that for all this prayer of Christ for St. Peter, the good man fell foully, and denied his Master shamefully: And shall Christs prayer be of greater efficacy for his Successors, for whom it was made but indirectly and by consequence, than for himself, for whom it was directly and in the first intention? And if not, then for all this Argument, the Popes may deny Christ as well as their chief and Decessor Peter. But it would not be forgotten how the Roman Doctors will by no means allow that St. Peter was then the chief Bishop or Pope, when he denied his Master. But then much less was he chosen chief Bishop when the prayer was made for him, because the prayer was made before his fall; that is, before that time in which it is confessed, he was not as yet made Pope: And how then the whole Succession of the Papacy should be intituled to it, passes the length of my hand to span. But then also if it be supposed and allowed, that these words shall intail infallibility upon the Chair of Rome, why shall not also all the Apostolical Sees be infallible as well as Rome? why shall not Constantinople or Byzantium where St Andrew sate? why shall not Ephesus where St. John sate? or Jerusalem where St. James sate? for Christ prayed for them all,

ut pater ſanctificaret eos ſua veritate, Joh. 17.
 Numb. 4. 2. For [*tibi dabo claves,*] was it perſonal or not? If it were, then the Biſhops of *Rome* have nothing to do with it: If it were not, then by what Argument will it be made evident that *St. Peter*, in the promiſe repreſented only his Succeſſors, and not the whole College of Apoſtles, and the whole Hierarchy? For if *St. Peter* was chief of the Apoſtles, and Head of the Church, he might fair enough be the repreſentative of the whole College, and receive it in their right as well as his own; which alſo is certain that it was ſo, for the ſame promiſe of binding and looſing, (which certainly was all that the Keys were given for) was made afterward to all the Apoſtles, *Mat. 18.* and the power of remitting and retaining which in reaſon and according to the ſtile of the Church is the ſame thing in other words, was actually given to all the Apoſtles, and unleſs that was the performing the firſt and ſecond promiſe, we find it not recorded in Scripture how or when or whether yet or no, the promiſe be performed: That promiſe I ſay which did not pertain to *Peter* principally and by origination, and to the reſt by Communication, ſociety and adherence, but that promiſe which was made to *Peter* firſt, but not for himſelf, but for all the College, and for all their Succeſſors, and then made the ſecond time to them all, without representation, but in diſfuſion, and perform'd to all alike in preſence except *St. Thomas*. And if he went to *St. Peter* to derive it from him, I know not; I find no record for that, but that Chriſt convey'd the promiſe to him by the ſame Commiſſion, the Church yet never doubted, nor had ſhe any reaſon. But this matter is too notorious: I ſay

ſay no more to it, but repeat the words and Argument of St. *Auſtin*, *Si hoc Petro tantum dictum eſt, non facit hoc Eccleſia*: If the Keys were only given and ſo promiſed to St. *Peter*, that the Church hath not the Keys, then the Church can neither bind nor looſe, remit nor retain, which God forbid; if any man ſhould endeavour to answer this Argument, I leave him and St. *Auſtin* to conteſt it.

3. For *paſce oves* there is little in that Allegation, beſides the boldneſs of the Objectors; for were not all the Apoſtles bound to feed Chriſt's ſheep? had they not all the Commiſſion from Chriſt, and Chriſt's Spirit immediately; St. *Paul* had certainly; did not St. *Peter* himſelf ſay to all the Biſhops of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia*, and *Bithinia*; that they ſhould feed the Flock of God, and the great Biſhop and Shepherd ſhould give them an immarceſcible Crown; plainly implying, that from whence they derived their Authority, from him they were ſure of a reward: In purſuance of which St. *Cyprian* laid his Argument upon this baſis, *Nam cum ſtatutum ſit omnibus nobis, &c. & ſingulis paſtoribus portio gregis, &c.* Did not St. *Paul* call to the Biſhops of *Ephesus* to feed the Flock of God, of which the holy Ghoſt hath made them Biſhops or Overſeers? and that this very Commiſſion was ſpoken to *Peter* not in a perſonal, but a publick capacity, and in him ſpoke to all the Apoſtles we ſee atteſted by St. *Auſtin*, and St. *Ambroſe* and generally by all Antiquity; and it ſo concern'd even every Prieſt that *Damaſus* was willing enough to have St. *Hierom* explicate many queſtions for him. And *Liberius* writes an Epiſtle to *Athanaſius* with much mo-deſty requiring his advice in a Queſtion of Faith,

Tr. ſo. in Joann.

Numb. 5.

Lib. 1. Ep. 3.

De agere Chriſti, c. 30.

Epiſt. ad Athanaſ. apud Athanaſ. tom. 1. pag. 42. Paris.

ἵνα καὶ ἀποπεισθῶς ὧ ἀδιακρίτως, περὶ ὧν ἀξιόις κελεύει μοί.

That I also may be persuaded without all doubting of those things which you shall be pleased to command me. Now *Liberius* needed not to have troubled himself to have writ into the East to *Athanasius*; for if he had but seated himself in his Chair, and made the dictate, the result of his pen and ink would certainly have taught him and all the Church; but that the good Pope was ignorant that either *pasce oves* was his own Charter, and Prerogative, or that any other words of Scripture had made him to be infallible, or if he was not ignorant of it, he did very ill to complement himself out of it. So did all those Bishops of *Rome* that in that troublesome and unprofitable Question of Easter, being unsatisfied in the supputation of the *Egyptians*, and the definitions of the Mathematical Bishops of *Alexandria*, did yet require and intreat St.

L. 10. Ep. 83.

Ambrose to tell them his opinion, as he himself witnesses; If *pasce oves* belongs only to the Pope by primary title, in these cases the sheep came to feed the Shepherd, which though it was well enough in the thing, is very ill for the pretensions of the Roman Bishops; and if we consider how little many of the Popes have done toward feeding the Sheep of Christ, we shall hardly determine which is the greater prevarication, that the Pope should claim the whole Commission to be granted to him, or that the execution of the Commission should be wholly passed over to others; and it may be there is a mystery in it, that since St. *Peter* sent a Bishop with his staff to raise up a Disciple of his from the dead, who was afterwards Bishop of *Triers* the Popes of *Rome* never wear a Pastoral staff except it be in that Diocese (says *Aquinas*) for great reason

that

that he who does not do the office, ſhould not bear the Symbol; but a man would think that the Popes Maſter of the Ceremonies was ill adviſed not to aſſign a Paſtoral Staff to him, who pretends the Commiſſion of *paſce oves* to belong to him by prime right, and origination. But this is not a buſineſs to be merry in.

But the great ſupport is expected from *Tu es* Numb. 6. *Petrus & ſuper hanc Petram edificabo Eccleſiam*, &c. Now there being ſo great difference in the expoſition of theſe words, by perſons diſ-interreſſed, who, if any, might be allowed to judge in this Queſtion, it is certain that neither one ſenſe nor other can be obtruded for an Article of Faith, much leſs as a Catholicon inſtead of all, by conſtituting an Authority which ſhould guide us in all Faith, and determine us in all Queſtions: For if the Church was not built upon the perſon of *Peter*, then his Succeſſors can challenge nothing from this inſtance; now that it was the confeſſion of *Peter* upon which the Church waſtorely for ever, we have witneſſes very credible, * *St. Ignatius*, † *St. Baſil*, || *St. Hilary*, * *St. Gregory Nyſſen*, † *St. Gregory the Great*, || *St. Aſt*, * *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, † *Iſidore Peluſiot*, and very many more. And although all theſe witneſſes concurring cannot make a propoſition to be true, yet they are ſufficient witneſſes, that it was not the Univerſal belief of Chriſtendom that the Church was built upon *St. Peters* perſon. Cardinal *Perron* hath a fine fancy to elude this variety of Expoſition, and the conſequents of it; For (ſaith he) theſe Expoſitions are not contrary or excluſive of each other, but incluſive and conſequent to each other: For the Church is founded cauſally upon the confeſſion of *St. Peter*, formally upon the miniſtry of his perſon, and this

M. 4. cont.
diſt. 24.

• *Ad Philadelph.*

† *Seleuc. orat.*
25.

|| *L. 6. de Trin.*

• *De Trin. ad-*
verſ. Judæos.

† *L. 3. Ep. 33.*

|| *In 1. Eph.*
loam. 17. 10.

• *De Trin. l. 4.*

† *L. 1. Ep. 235.*

was a reward or a conſequent of the former: So that theſe Expoſitions are both true, but they are conjoin'd as mediate and immediate, direct and collateral, literal and moral, original and perpetual, acceſſory and temporal, the one conſign'd at the beginning, the other introduc'd upon occaſion: For before the ſpring of the *Arrian* hereſy, the Fathers expounded theſe words of the perſon of *Peter*; but after the *Arrians* troubled them, the Fathers finding great Authority, and Energy in this confeſſion of *Peter* for the eſtabliſhment of the natural filiation of the Son of God, to advance the reputation of theſe words and the force of the Argument, gave themſelves licence to expound theſe words to the preſent advantage, and to make the confeſſion of *Peter* to be the foundation of the Church, that if the *Arrians* ſhould encounter this Authority, they might with more prejudice to their perſons declaim againſt their cauſe by ſaying they overthrew the foundation of the Church. Beſides that this answer does much diſhonour the reputation of the Father's integrity, and makes their interpretations leſs credible as being made not of knowledge or reaſon, but of neceſſity and to ſerve a preſent turn, it is alſo falſe: For * *Ignatius* expounds it in a ſpiritual ſenſe, which alſo the Liturgy attributed to St. *James* calls *ὁ πῆτερ καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία*: And *Origen* expounds it myſtically to a third purpoſe, but excluſively, to this: And all theſe were before the *Arrian* Controverſy. But if it be lawful to make ſuch unproved obſervations, it would have been to better purpoſe, and more reaſon to have obſerved it thus: The Fathers ſo long as the Biſhop of *Rome* kept himſelf to the limits preſcrib'd him by Chriſt, and indulg'd to him by the

* *Epist. ad
Philadelph.
In c. 16. Mat.
tract. 1.*

the conſtitution or conſeſſion of the Church, were unwary and apt to expound this place of the perſon of *Peter*; but when the Church began to enlarge her phylaſteries by the favour of Princes, and the Sun-ſhine of a prosperous fortune, and the Pope by the advantage of the Imperial Seat, and other accidents began to invade upon the other Biſhops and Patriarchs, then that he might have no colour from Scripture for ſuch new pretenſions, they did moſt generally turn the ſtream of their expoſitions from the perſon to the conſeſſion of *Peter*, and declared that to be the foundation of the Church. And thus I have requited fancy with fancy; but for the main point, that theſe two Expoſitions are incluſive of each other, I find no warrant; for though they may conſiſt together well enough, if Chriſt had ſo intended them; yet unleſs it could be ſhown by ſome circumſtance of the Text, or ſome other extrinſical Argument that they muſt be ſo, and that both ſenſes were actually intended, it is but *gratis dictum* and a begging of the Queſtion, to ſay that they are ſo, and the fancy ſo new, that when *St. Auſtin* had expounded this place of the perſon of *Peter*, he reviews it again, and in his *Retractions* leaves every man to his liberty, which to take; as having nothing certain in this Article: which had been altogether needleſs if he had believed them to be incluſively in each other, neither of them had need to have been retracted: both were alike true, both of them might have been believed: But I ſaid the fancy was new, and I had reaſon; for it was ſo unknown till yeſterday, that even the late Writers of his own ſide, expound the words of the conſeſſion of *St. Peter* excluſively to his perſon or any thing elſe, as is to be ſeen in

• *Defenſ. pacis*
part. 2. c. 28.
† *Recommend.*
facr. Script.

* *Marfilius*, † *Petrus de Aliaco* and the gloſs upon *Diſt. 19. can. ita Dominus*, *Sut ſupra*, which alſo was the interpretation of *Phavorinus Camers* their own Biſhop, from whom they learnt the reſemblance of the word *Πέλες* and *πέλες*, of which they have made ſo many gay diſcourſes, *πέλες* *περὶ ὅτι πῶς ἀρραγὴς κυρία ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριςτὸς εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ θεμελίῳ ποθεμελιωμένη.*

Numb. 7.

5. But upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from ſo great and numerous Teſtimony of Fathers, I am willing to believe that it was not the confeſſion of St. *Peter*, but his perſon upon which Chriſt ſaid he would build his Church, or that theſe Expositions are conſiſtent with and conſequent to each other, that this confeſſion was the objective foundation of Faith, and Chriſt and his Apoſtles the ſubjective, Chriſt principally, and St. *Peter* inſtrumentally; and yet I underſtand not any advantage will hence accrue to the See of *Rome*: For upon St. *Peter* it was built, but not alone, for it was upon the foundation of the Apoſtles, and Prophets; Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone; and when St. *Paul* reckoned the Oeconomy of Hierarchy, he reckons not *Peter* firſt, and then the Apoſtles. But firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, &c. And whatſoever is firſt, either is before all things elſe, or at leaſt nothing is before it: So that at leaſt St. *Peter* is not before all the reſt of the Apoſtles, which alſo St. *Paul* expreſſly avers, *I am in nothing inferior to the very chiefſt of the Apoſtles*, no not in the very being a Rock and a Foundation; and it was of the Church of *Ephesus*, that St. *Paul* ſaid in particular it was *columna & firmamentum veritatis*, that Church was, not excluding others, for they

they alſo were as much as ſhe; for ſo we keep cloſe and be united to the corner ſtone, although ſome be maſter builders, yet all may build, and we have known whole Nations converted by Lay-Men and Women, who have been builders ſo far as to bring them to the corner ſtone.

6. But ſuppoſe all theſe things concern St. Peter, in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the Biſhops of Rome to do with this? For how will it appear that theſe promiſes and Commiſſions did relate to him as a particular Biſhop, and not as a publick Apoſtle? Since this latter is ſo much the more likely, becauſe the great pretence of all ſeems in reaſon more proportionable to the founding of a Church, than its continuance: And yet if they did relate to him as a particular Biſhop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty) yet why ſhall St. Clement or Linus rather ſucceed in this great office of headſhip than St. John or any of the Apoſtles that ſurvived Peter: It is no way likely a private perſon ſhould ſkip over the head of an Apoſtle: or why ſhall his Succeſſors at Rome more enjoy the benefit of it than his Succeſſors at Antioch, ſince that he was at Antioch and preached there, we have a Divine Authority, but that he did ſo at Rome at moſt we have but a humane; and if it be replied that becauſe he dyed at Rome, it was Argument enough that there his Succeſſors were to inherit his privilege, this beſides that at moſt it is but one little degree of probability, and ſo not of ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport an Article of Faith; it makes that the great Divine Right of Rome, and the Apoſtolical preſidency was ſo contingent and fallible as to depend upon

*Vid. Carver.
conf. Qu. ve.
ſpeyt.*

the decree of *Nero*; and if he had ſent him to *Antioch* there to have ſuffered Martyrdom, the Biſhops of that Town had been Heads of the Catholick Church. And this thing preſſes the harder, becauſe it is held by no mean perſons in the Church of *Rome*, that the Biſhoprick of *Rome* and the Papacy are things ſeparable: And the Pope may quit that See and ſit in another, which to my underſtanding is an Argument, that he that ſucceeded *Peter* at *Antioch*, is as much ſupream by Divine Right as he that ſits at *Rome*; both alike, that is, neither by Divine Ordinance: For if the Roman Biſhops by Chriſt's intention were to be Head of the Church, then by the ſame intention, the Succeſſion muſt be continued in that See, and then let the Pope go whither he will, the Biſhop of *Rome* muſt be the Head, which they themſelves deny, and the Pope himſelf did not believe, when in a ſchiſm he ſat at *Avignon*; and that it was to be continued in the See of *Rome*, it is but offered to us upon conjecture, upon an act of providence, as they fancy it, ſo ordering it by viſion, and this proved by an Author which themſelves call fabulous and apocryphal, under the name of *Linus*, in *Biblioth. PP. de paſſione Petri & Pauli*: A goodly building which relies upon an event that was accidental, whoſe purpoſe was but inſinuated, the meaning of it but conjectur'd at, and this conjecture ſo uncertain, that it was an imperfect aim at the purpoſe of an event, which whether it was true or no, was ſo uncertain, that it is ten to one there was no ſuch matter. And yet again, another degree of uncertainty is, to whom the Biſhops of *Rome* do ſucceed: For *St. Paul* was as much Biſhop of *Rome*, as *St. Peter* was; there he preſided, there he preach'd, and he it was that was the Doctor

of

of the Uncircumciſion and of the Gentiles, St. *Peter* of the Circumciſion, and of the Jews only; and therefore the converted Jews at *Rome*, might with better reaſon claim the privilege of St. *Peter*, than the Romans and the Churches in her Communion, who do not derive from Jewiſh Parents.

7. If the words were never ſo appropriate to *Numb. 9.* *Peter*, or alſo communicated to his Succeſſors, yet of what value will the conſequent be? what prerogative is entail'd upon the Chair of *Rome*? For that St. *Peter* was the Miniſterial Head of the Church, is the moſt that is deſired to be proved by thoſe and all other words brought for the ſame purpoſes, and intereſts of that See: Now let the Miniſterial Head have what Dignity can be imagined, let him be the firſt (and in all Communities that are regular, and orderly there muſt be ſomething that is firſt, upon certain occaſions where an equal power cannot be exerciſed, and made pompous or ceremonial:) But will this Miniſterial Headſhip infer an infallibility? will it infer more than the Headſhip of the Jewiſh Synagogue, where clearly the High Prieſt was ſupreme in many ſenſes, yet in no ſenſe infallible? will it infer more to us, than it did amongſt the Apoſtles? amongſt whom if for orders ſake, St. *Peter* was the firſt, yet he had no compulſory power over the Apoſtles; there was no ſuch thing ſpoke of, nor any ſuch thing put in practice. And that the other Apoſtles were by a perſonal privilege as infallible as himſelf, is no reaſon to hinder the exerciſe of juriſdiction or any compulſory power over them; For though in Faith they were infallible, yet in manners and matter of fact as likely to err as St. *Peter* himſelf was, and certainly there might have ſomething happened

in the whole College, that might have been a Record of his Authority, by transmitting an example of the exercise of some Judicial power over some one of them: If he had but withstood any of them to their faces, as *St. Paul* did him, it had been more than yet is said in his behalf. Will the Ministerial Headship infer any more than when the Church in a Community or a public capacity, should do any Act of Ministry Ecclesiastical, he shall be first in Order? Suppose this to be a dignity to preside in Councils, which yet was not always granted him: Suppose it to be a power of taking cognisance of the major Causes of Bishops when Councils cannot be called; Suppose it a double voice or the last decisive, or the negative in the causes exterior; Suppose it to be what you will of dignity or external regiment, which when all Churches were united in Communion, and neither the interest of States, nor the engagement of opinions had made dis-union, might better have been acted than now it can; yet this will fall infinitely short of a power to determine Controversies infallibly, and to prescribe to all Mens Faith and Consciences. A Ministerial Headship or the prime Minister cannot in any capacity become the foundation of the Church to any such purpose. And therefore men are causelessly amused with such premises, and are afraid of such Conclusions which will never follow from the admission of any sense of these words that can with any probability be pretended.

Numb. 10. 8. I consider that these Arguments from Scripture, are too weak to support such an Authority which pretends to give Oracles, and to answer infallibly in Questions of Faith, because there is greater reason to believe the Popes of *Rome* have
erred,

erred, and greater certainty of demonſtration, than theſe places can be that they are infallible, as will appear by the inſtances and perpetual experiment of their being deceived, of which there is no Queſtion, but of the ſenſe of theſe places there is: And indeed, if I had as clear Scripture for their infallibility, as I have againſt their half Communion, againſt their Service in an unknown tongue, worſhipping of Images, and divers other Articles, I would make no ſcruple of believing, but limit and conform my underſtanding to all their Dictates, and believe it reaſonable all Propheſying ſhould be reſtrain'd. But till then, I have leave to diſcourſe, and to uſe my reaſon; and to my reaſon, it ſeems not likely that neither Chriſt nor any of his Apoſtles, *St. Peter* himſelf, nor *St. Paul* writing to the Church of *Rome*, ſhould ſpeak the leaſt word or tittle of the infallibility of their Biſhops, for it was certainly as convenient to tell us of a remedy, as to foretell that certainly there muſt needs be hereſies, and need of a remedy. And it had been a certain determination of the Queſtion, if when ſo rare an opportunity was miſtred in the Queſtion about Circumciſion that they ſhould have ſent to *Peter*, who for his infallibility in ordinary, and his power of Headſhip would not only with reaſon enough as being infallibly aſſiſted, but alſo for his Authority have beſt determin'd the Queſtion, if at leaſt the firſt Chriſtians had known ſo profitable and ſo excellent a ſecret; and although we have but little Record, that the firſt Council at *Jeruſalem* did much obſerve the ſolemnities of Law, and the forms of Conciliary proceedings, and the Ceremonials; yet ſo much of it as is recorded, is againſt them, *St. James* and not *St. Peter* gave
the

the final ſentence, and although St. Peter determin'd the Queſtion *pro libertate*, yet St. James made the Decree, and the *Aſſumentum* too, and gave ſentence they ſhould abſtain from ſome things there mentioned; which by way of temper he judg'd moſt expedient: And ſo it paſſed. And St. Peter ſhewed no ſign of a Superiour Authority, nothing of Superiour jurisdiction, *Ὁσα ὃ αὐτὸν μὲ κοινῆς πάντα ποιεῖντα γινώσκουσ, ἐδὲν αὐτοῦ ἴκως ἐδ' ἀρχικώς.*

S. Chryſoſt.
hom. 3. in.
act. Apoſt.

Numb. 11.

So that if this Queſtion be to be determin'd by Scripture, it muſt either be ended by plain places or by obſcure; plain places there are none, and thoſe that are with greateſt fancy pretended, are expounded by Antiquity to contrary purpoſes. But if obſcure places be all the *αὐθεντία*, by what means ſhall we infallibly find the ſenſe of them? The Pope's interpretation, though in all other caſes it might be pretended, in this cannot; for it is the thing in Queſtion, and therefore cannot determine for it ſelf; either therefore we have alſo another infallible guide beſides the Pope, and ſo we have two Foundations and two Heads (for this as well as the other upon the ſame reaſon) or elſe (which is indeed the truth) there is no infallible way to be infallibly aſſured that the Pope is infallible. Now it being againſt the common condition of Men, above the pretences of all other Governours Eccleſiaſtical, againſt the Analogy of Scripture, and the deportment of the other Apoſtles, againſt the Oeconomy of the Church, and St. Peter's own entertainment, the preſumption lies againſt him, and theſe places, are to be left to their prime intentions, and not put upon the rack, to force them to confeſs what they never thought.

But

But now for Antiquity, if that be depoſed in this Queſtion, there are ſo many circumſtances to be conſidered to reconcile their words and their actions, that the proceſs is more troubleſome, than the Argument can be concluding, or the matter conſiderable: But I ſhall a little conſider it, ſo far at leaſt as to ſhew either Antiquity ſaid no ſuch thing as is pretended, or if they did, it is but little conſiderable, becauſe they did not believe themſelves; their practice was the greateſt evidence in the world againſt the pretence of their words. But I am much eaſed of a long diſquiſition in this particular (for I love not to prove a Queſtion by Arguments whoſe Authority is in it ſelf as fallible, and by circumſtances made as uncertain as the Queſtion) by the ſaying of *Aeneas Sylvius*, that before the *Nicene* Council every man liv'd to himſelf, and ſmall reſpect was had to the Church of *Rome*, which practice could not well conſiſt with the Doctrines of their Biſhops infallibility, and by conſequence ſupreme judgment and laſt reſolution in matters of Faith; but eſpecially by the inſinuation and conſequent acknowledgement of *Bellarmino*, that for 1000 years together the Fathers knew not of the Doctrine of the Pope's infallibility, for *Nilus*, *Geſon*, *Alemain*, the Divines of *Paris*, *Alphonſus de Caſtro*, and Pope *Adrian VI.* perſons who lived 1400 years after Chriſt, affirm, that infallibility is not ſeated in the Popes perſon, that he may err and ſometimes actually hath, which is a clear demonſtration that the Church knew no ſuch Doctrine as this; there had been no Decree nor Tradition, nor general opinion of the Fathers, or of any Age before them; and therefore this opinion which *Bellarmino* would fain blaſt if he could, yet in his

Numb. 12.

De Rom. Pont.
l. 4. c. 2. § ſe-
cunda ſenten-
tia.

his Conclusion he ſays it is not *proprie heritica*. A device and an expreſſion of his own without ſenſe or precedent. But if the Fathers had ſpoke of it and believed it, why may not a diſagreeing perſon as well reject their Authority when it is in behalf of *Rome*, as they of *Rome* without ſcruple caſt them off when they ſpeak againſt it? For as *Bellarmino* being preſſed with the Authority of *Nilus* Biſhop of *Theſſalonica* and other Fathers, he ſays that the Pope acknowledges no Fathers but they are all his Children, and therefore they cannot depoſe againſt him; and if that be true, why ſhall we take their Teſtimonies for him; for if Sons depoſe in their Fathers behalf, it is twenty to one, but the adverſe party will be caſt, and therefore at the beſt it is but *ſuſpectum Teſtimonium*. But indeed this diſcourſe ſignifies nothing, but a perpetual uncertainty in ſuch topicks, and that where a violent prejudice, or a concerning intereſt is engag'd, men by not regarding what any man ſays, proclaim to all the World that nothing is certain, but Divine Authority.

Numb. 13. But I will not take advantage of what *Bellarmino* ſays, nor what *Stapleton*, or any one of them all ſay, for that will be but to preſs upon perſonal perſuaſions, or to urge a general Queſtion with a particular deſaillance, and the Queſtion is never the nearer to an end; for if *Bellarmino* ſays any thing that is not to another mans purpoſe or perſuaſion, that man will be tryed by his own Argument, not by anothers. And ſo would every man do that loves his liberty, as all wiſe men do, and therefore retain it by open violence, or private evaſions: But to return.

An Authority from *Irenaus* in this Question, and on behalf of the Popes infallibility, or the Authority of the See of *Rome*, or of the necessity of communicating with them is very fallible; For besides that there are almost a dozen answers to the words of the Allegation, as is to be seen in those that trouble themselves in this Question with the Allegation, and answering such Authorities, yet if they should make for the affirmative of this Question, it is *protestatio contra factum*. For *Irenaus* had no such great opinion of Pope *Victor's* infallibility, that he believed things in the same degree of necessity that the Pope did, for therefore he chides him for Excommunicating the *Asian* Bishops ἀπὸ πάντων all at a blow in the Question concerning Easter day; and in a Question of Faith he expressly disagreed from the doctrine of *Rome*; for *Irenaus* was of the Millenary opinion, and believed it to be a Tradition Apostolical; now if the Church of *Rome* was of that opinion, then why is she not now? where is the succession of her doctrine? But if she was not of that opinion then, and *Irenaus* was, where was his belief of that Churches infallibility? The same I urge concerning St. *Cyprian* who was the head of a Sect in opposition to the Church of *Rome*, in the Question of rebaptization, and he and the Abettors, *Firmilian* and the other Bishops of *Cappadocia*, and the voisinage spoke harsh words of *Stephen*, and such as became them not to speak to an infallible Doctor, and the supreme Head of the Church. I will urge none of them to the disadvantage of that See, but only note the Satyrs of *Firmilian* against him, because it is of good use, to shew that it is possible for them in their ill carriage to blast the reputation and efficacy of a great Authority:
For

Epist. Firmi-
liani contr.
Steph. ad Cy-
prian. Vid. e-
tiam Ep. Cy-
priani ad
Pompeium.

Cyprian. Epist.
ad Quintum
fratrem.

For he ſays that the Church did pretend the Authority of the Apoſtles, *cum in multis sacramentis divina rei, à principio discrepet, & ab Ecclesia Hierosolymitanâ, & defamet Petrum & Paulum tanquam authores.* And a little after juſtè *dedignor* (ſays he) *apertam & manifestam ſtultitiam Stephani, per quam veritas Christiana petra aboletur,* which words ſay plainly that for all the goodly pretence of Apoſtolic Authority, the Church of *Rome* did then in many things of Religion diſagree from Divine Inſtitution (and from the Church of *Jerusalem*, which they had as great eſteem of for Religion ſake, as of *Rome* for its principality) and that ſtill in pretending to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* they diſhonoured thoſe bleſſed Apoſtles, and deſtroyed the honour of their pretence by their untoward prevarication; which words I confeſs paſs my ſkill to reconcile them to an opinion of infallibility; and although they were ſpoken by an angry perſon, yet they declare that in *Africa* they were not then perſuaded, as now they were at *Rome*: *Nam nec Petrus quem primum Dominus elegit vendicavit ſibi aliquid insolentèr aut arrogantèr aſſumpſit, ut diceret ſe primum tenere.* That was their belief then, and how the contrary hath grown up to that height where now it is, all the World is witneſs: And now I ſhall not need to note concerning St. *Hierom*, that he gave a complement to *Damaſus*, that he would not have given to *Liberius*, *Qui tecum non coligit ſpargit.* For it might be true enough of *Damaſus* who was a good Biſhop and a right believer; but if *Liberius*'s name had been put inſtead of *Damaſus*, the caſe had been altered with the name; for St. *Hierom* did believe and write it ſo, that *Liberius* had ſubſcrib'd to *Arianism*.

And

And if either he or any of the reſt had believ'd the Pope could not be a Heretick nor his Faith fail, but be ſo good and of ſo competent Authority as to be a Rule to Chriſtendom; Why did they not appeal to the Pope in the Arrian Controverſy? Why was the Biſhop of *Rome* made a Party and a Concurrent as other good Biſhops were, and not a Judge and an Arbitrator in the Queſtion? Why did the Fathers preſcribe ſo many Rules and cautions and proviſoes for the diſcovery of Heresy? Why were the Emperours at ſo much charge, and the Church at ſo much trouble as to call and convene in Councils reſpectively, to diſpute ſo frequently, to write ſo ſedulouſly, to obſerve all advantages againſt their Adverſaries, and for the truth, and never offered to call for the Pope to determine the Queſtion in his Chair? certainly no way could have been ſo expedite, none ſo concluding and peremptory, none could have convinc'd ſo certainly, none could have triumph'd ſo openly over all discrepantſ as this, if they had known of any ſuch thing as his being infallible, or that he had been appointed by Chriſt to be the Judge of Controverſies. And therefore I will not trouble this Diſcourſe to excuſe any more words either pretended or really ſaid to this purpoſe of the Pope, for they would but make Books ſwell and the Queſtion endleſs. I ſhall only to this purpoſe obſerve that the Old Writers were ſo far from believing the infallibility of the Roman Church or Biſhop, that many Biſhops and many Churches did actually live and continue out of the Roman Communion; particularly * *St. Auſtin*, who with 217 Biſhops and their Succeſſors for 100 years together ſtood ſeparate from that Church, if we

De Script. Ecclef. in Fortunatiano,

* *Ubi illa Auguſtini & reliquorum prudentia? quis*

may

jam ferat craſ-
ſiſſima igno-
rantia illam
vocem in tot
& tantis Pa-
tribus? Alan.
Cop. dialog. p.
76, 77. Vide
etiam Bonifac.
II. Epist. ad
Eulaliū A-
lexandrinum.
Lindanum Pa-
nopt. l. 4. c. 89.
in fine Salme-
ron. Tom. 12.
Tract. 68. § ad
Canonem San-
der. de viſibili
Monarchia, l.
7. n. 411. Ba-
ron. Tom. 10.
A. D. 878.

may believe their own Records: So did *Ignatius* of *Constantinople*, *St. Chryſoſtom*, *St. Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, thoſe Biſhops of *Asia* that ſepa-
rated in the Queſtion of *Eaſter*, and thoſe of
Africa in the Queſtion of rebaptization: But be-
ſides this, moſt of them had opinions which the
Church of *Rome* diſavows now, and therefore
did ſo then, or elſe ſhe hath innovated in her
Doctrinē, which though it be moſt true and no-
torious, I am ſure ſhe will never confeſs. But
no excuſe can be made for *St. Auſtin*'s diſagree-
ing, and conteſting in the Queſtion of appeals
to *Rome*, the neceſſity of Communicating In-
fants, the abſolute damnation of Infants to the
pains of Hell, if they die before Baptiſm, and
divers other particulars. It was a famous act
of the Biſhops of *Liguria* and *Iſtria* who ſeeing
the Pope of *Rome* conſenting to the fifth Synod
in diſparagement of the famous Council of *Chal-
cedon*, which for their own intereſts they did
not like of, they renounced ſubjection to his
Patriarchate, and erected a Patriarch at *Aqui-
leia* who was afterwards tranſlated to *Venice*,
where his name remains to this day. It is al-
ſo notorious that moſt of the Fathers were of
opinion that the Souls of the Faithful did not
enjoy the beatifick Viſion before Dooms-day;
whether *Rome* was then of that opinion or no,
I know not, I am ſure now they are not; wit-
neſs the Councils of *Florence* and *Trent*; but of
this I ſhall give a more full account afterwards.
But if to all this which is already noted, we
add that great variety of opinions amongſt the
Fathers and Councils in aſſignation of the Ca-
non, they not conſulting with the Biſhop of
Rome, or any of them thinking themſelves bound
to follow his Rule in enumeration of the Books

of

of Scripture, I think no more need to be ſaid as to this particular.

8. But now if after all this, there be ſome *Numb. 15.* Popes which were notorious Hereticks, and Preachers of falſe Doctrines, ſome that made impious Decrees both in faith and manners; ſome that have determin'd Questions with egregious ignorance and ſtupidity, ſome with apparent Sophiſtry, and many to ſerve their own ends moſt openly, I ſuppoſe then the infallibility will diſband, and we may do to him as to other good Biſhops, believe him when there is cauſe; but if there be none, then to uſe our Conſciences, *Non enim ſalvat Chriſtianum quod Pontifex conſtanter affirmat præceptum ſuum eſſe juſtum, ſed oportet illud examinari, & ſe juxta regulam ſuperius datum dirigere*: I would not inſtance and repeat the errors of dead Biſhops, if the extreme boldneſs of the pretence did not make it neceſſary: But if we may believe *Tertul- Lib. adver. Praxeam.* lian, Pope *Zepherinus* approv'd the Prophecies of *Montanus*, and upon that approbation granted peace to the Churches of *Aſia* and *Phrygia*, till *Praxeas* perſuaded him to revoke his act: But let this reſt upon the credit of *Tertullian*, *Vid. Liberal. in breviario, cap. 22.* whether *Zepherinus* were a *Montaniſt* or no; ſome ſuch thing there was for certain. Pope *Vigilius* denyed two natures in Chriſt, and in his *Durand. 4. diſt. 7. q. 4.* Epistle to *Theodora* the Empreſs anathematized all them that ſaid he had two natures in one perſon; *St. Gregory* himſelf permitted Priests to give confirmation, which is all one as if he ſhould permit Deacons to conſecrate, they being by Divine Ordinance annexed to the higher orders; and upon this very ground *Adrianus* affirms that the Pope may err in *deſiniendis dog-* *Qua. de con-* *firm. art. ult.* *matibus fidei*. And that we may not fear we

O

ſhall

3. dist. 24.
q. unica.

A. D. 3. 7. n.
41.
Dist. 19. & 9.
L. 4. Ep. 2.

Vid. Corranz.
Sum. Concil.
fol. 218. Edit.
Antwerp.

Cap. per vene-
rabilem. qui
filii sint legiti-
mi.

shall want instances, we may to secure it take their own confession, *Nam multe sunt decretales hereticae*, says *Occham* as he is cited by *Almain*, & firmiter hoc credo (says he for his own particular) *sed non licet dogmatizare oppositum quoniam sunt determinatae*. So that we may as well see that it is certain that Popes may be Hereticks, as that it is dangerous to say so; and therefore there are so few that teach it: All the Patriarchs and the Bishop of *Rome* himself subscrib'd to *Arrianism* (as *Baronius* confesses;) and **Gratian* affirms that Pope *Anastasius* the Second was stricken of God for communicating with the Heretick *Photinus*. I know it will be made light of that *Gregory* the Seventh saith the very exorcists of the Roman Church are Superior to Princes. But what shall we think of that decretal of *Gregory* the Third, who wrote to *Boniface* his Legate in *Germany*, *quod illi quorum uxores infirmitate aliquâ morbida debitum reddere noluerunt, aliis poterant nubere?* was this a Doctrine fit for the Head of the Church, and infallible Doctor? it was plainly, if any thing ever was *doctrina Demoniorum*, and is noted for such by *Gratian*, *caus. 32. q. 7. can. Quod proposuisti*. Where the gloss also intimates that the same privilege was granted to the Englishmen by *Gregory*, *quia novi erant in fide*. And sometimes we had little reason to expect much better; for, not to instance in that learned discourse in the Canon Law *de majoritate & obedientiâ*, where the Popes Supremacy over Kings is proved from the first chapter of *Genesis*, and the Pope is the Sun, and the Emperor is the Moon, for that was the fancy of one Pope perhaps; though made authentick and doctrinal by him; it was (if it be possible)

more

more ridiculous, that Pope *Innocent* the Third urges that the Moſaical Law was ſtill to be obſerved, and that upon this Argument, *Sanè*, ſaith he, *cum Deuteronomium ſecunda lex interpretetur ex vi vocabuli comprobatur ut quod ibi dicitur in Testamento novo debeat observari*: Worſe yet; for when there was a corruption crept into the Decree called *Sancta Romana*, Diſt. 15. apud Gratian. where inſtead of theſe words *Sedulii opus hereticis verſibus deſcriptum*, all the old Copies till of late read *hereticis verſibus deſcriptum*; this very miſtake made many wiſe men; (as *Pierius* De Sacerd. lib. ſays) yea Pope *Adrian* the Sixth, no worſe man, believe that all Poetry was heretical, becauſe (forſooth) Pope *Gelaſius* whoſe Decree that was, although he believed *Sedulius* to be a good Catholick, yet as they thought, he concluded his Verſes to be heretical. But theſe were ignorances; it hath been worſe amongſt ſome others, whoſe errors have been more malicious, Pope *Honorius* was condemned by the ſixth General Synod, and his Epiſtles burnt, and in the ſeventh action of the eighth Synod, the Acts of the Roman Council under *Adrian* the Second are recited, in which it is ſaid that *Honorius* was juſtly Anathematiz'd, becauſe he was convict of hereſy. *Bellarmino* ſays it is probable that Pope *Adrian* and the Roman Council were deceived with falſe Copies of the ſixth Synod, and that *Honorius* was no Heretick. To this I ſay, that although the Roman Synod and the eighth general Synod, and Pope *Adrian*, altogether are better witneſſes for the thing than *Bellarmino*'s conjecture is againſt it, yet if we allow his conjecture we ſhall loſe nothing in the whole, for either the Pope is no infallible Doctor, but may be a Heretick as

Honorius was, or else a Council is to us no infallible determiner; I ſay, as to us, for if *Adrian* and the whole *Roman* Council and the eighth General were all cozen'd with false Copies of the sixth Synod, which was so little a while before them, and whose acts were transacted and kept in the Theatre and Records of the Catholick Church; he is a bold man that will be confident that he hath true Copies now. So that let which they please stand or fall, let the Pope be a Heretick or the Councils be deceived and palpably abused, (for the other, we will dispute it upon other instances and arguments when we shall know which part they will choose) in the mean time we shall get in the general what we lose in the particular. This only, this device of saying the Copies of the Councils were false, was the stratagem of *Albertus Pighius* 900 years after the thing was done, of which invention *Pighius* was presently admonished, blamed, and wished to recant. Pope *Nicholas* explicated the Mystery of the Sacrament with so much ignorance and zeal that in condemning *Berengarius* he taught a worse impiety. But what need I any more instances; it is a confessed case by *Baronius*, by *Biel*, by *Stella*, *Almain*, *Occham*, and *Canus*, and generally by the best Scholars in the Church of *Rome*, that a Pope may be a Heretick, and that some of them actually were so, and no less than three General Councils did believe the same thing: viz. sixth, seventh, and eighth, as *Belarmine* is pleased to acknowledge in his fourth book *de Pontifice Romano*, c. 11. resp. ad Arg. 4. And the Canon *ſi Papa*, dist. 40. affirms it in expreſs terms, that a Pope is judicable and punishable in that case. But there is no wound

but

Vid. diatrib. de
act. 6. & 7. Synod.
mod. praefatione
ad Lectorem
& Domini-
cum Bannes
22. q. 1. a.
10. dub. 2.

* *Picus* Mi-
rand. in expo-
ſit. theorema. 4.

but ſome Emperick or other will pretend to cure it, and there is a cure for this too. For though it be true that if a Pope were a Heretick, the Church might depoſe him, yet no Pope can be a Heretick, not but that the man may, but the Pope cannot, for he is *ipſo facto* no Pope, for he is no Chriſtian; ſo *Bellarmino*: and ſo when you think you have him faſt, he is gone, and nothing of the Pope left; but who ſees not the extream folly of this evaſion? For beſides that out of fear and caution he grants more than he needs, more than was fought for in the Queſtion, the Pope hath no more privilege than the Abbot of *Cluny*, for he cannot be a Heretick, nor be depoſed by a Council, for if he be *manifeſtly* a Heretick he is *ipſo facto* no Abbot, for he is no Chriſtian; and if the Pope be a Heretick *privately and occultly*, for that he may be accuſed and judged ſaid the Gloſs upon the Canon *ſi Papa diſt. 40*. And the Abbot of *Cluny* and one of his meaneſt Monks can be no more, therefore the caſe is all one. But * this is fitter to make ſport with than to interrupt a ſerious diſcourſe. And therefore although the Canon *Sancta Romana* approves all the Decretals of Popes, yet that very Decretal hath not decreed it firm enough, but that they are ſo warily received by them, that when they liſt they are pleaſed to diſſent from them; and it is evident in the Extravagant of *Sixtus IV. Com. De reliquiis*; who appointed a Feaſt of the immaculate conception, a ſpecial Office for the day, and Indulgences enough to the obſervers of it: And yet the *Dominicans* were ſo far from believing the Pope to be intallible and his Decree authentick, that they de-claim'd againſt it in their Pulpits ſo furioſly and ſo long till they were prohibited under pain

L. 2. c. 30. ubi
ſupra. §. eſt
ergo.

* Vide *Al-
phonſ. à Ciffr.
lib. 1. adv. h. a.
ref. c. 4. hoc
lemma viden-
tem affabré.*

*Vid. etiam In-
nocentium
Serm. 2. de
conſecrat. Pon-
tiſ. aſſ. 7 8
Synodi. &
Concil. c. ſub
Symmacho,
vide Collat. 8.
can. 12 ubi ſi
P. judicialiter
ſententiam d.*

*Vigili in cauſa
trium Capituli
lorum damna-
unt expreſſe.
Extra coram.
Extrav. grave.
tit. X.*

of Excommunication, to ſay the Virgin *Mary* was conceived in Original ſin; Now what ſolemnity can be more required for the Pope to make a Cathedral determination of an Article? The Article was ſo concluded, that a Feaſt was inſtituted for its celebration, and pain of Excommunication threatned to them which ſhould preach the contrary; Nothing more ſolemn, nothing more confident and ſevere: And yet after all this, to ſhew that whatſoever thoſe people would have us to believe, they'll believe what they liſt themſelves: This thing was not determined *de fide* ſaith *Victorellus*; Nay, the Author of the Gloſs of the Canon Law hath theſe expreſs words, *De feſto Conceptionis nihil dicitur quia celebrandum non eſt, ſicut in multis regionibus fit, & maxime in Angliâ, & hac eſt ratio, quia in peccatis concepta fuit ſicut & ceteri Sancti.* And the Commiſſaries, of *Sixtus V.* and *Gregory XIII.* did not expunge theſe words, but left them upon Record, not only againſt a received and more approved opinion of the *Jesuits* and *Franciscans*, but alſo in plain defiance of a Decree made by their viſible head of the Church, who (if ever any thing was decreed by a Pope, with an intent to oblige all Chriſtendom) decreed * this to that purpoſe.

Hæc in perpetuum valiturâ conſtitutione ſtatuitur, &c. De reliquiis, &c. Extrav. Com. Sixt. 4. cap. 1.

Numb. 16.

So that without taking particular notice of it, that egregious ſophiſtry and flattery of the late Writers of the Roman Church is in this inſtance, beſides divers others before mentioned, clearly made invalid. For here the Biſhop of *Rome* not as a private Doctor, but as Pope, not by declaring his own opinion, but with an intent to oblige the Church, gave ſentence in a Queſtion which the *Dominicans* will ſtill account *pro non determinatâ*. And every decretal recorded in the

the Canon Law if it be falſe in the matter, is juſt ſuch another inſtance: And *Alphonſus a Caſtro* ſays it to the ſame purpoſe, in the inſtance of *Celeſtine* diſſolving Marriages for hereſy, *Neque Celeſtini error talis fuit qui ſoli negligentia impu- tari debeat, ita ut illum erraſſe dicamus velut pri- vatam perſonam & non ut Papam, quoniam hujus- modi Celeſtini definitio habetur in antiquis decreta- libus in cap. Laudabilem, titulo de converſione in- fidelium; quam ego ipſe vidi & legi, lib. 1. adv. hereſ. cap. 4.* And therefore 'tis a moſt intole- rable folly to pretend that the Pope cannot err in his Chair, though he may err in his Cloſet, and may maintain a falſe opinion even to his death: For beſides that, it is ſottiſh to think that either he would not have the world of his own opinion (as all men naturally would) or that if he were ſet in his Chair, he would de- termine contrary to himſelf in his ſtudy (and therefore to repreſent it as poſſible, they are ſain to flie to a Miracle for which they have no colour, neither inſtructions, nor inſinuation, nor warrant, nor promiſe; beſides that, it were impious and unreaſonable to depoſe him for hereſy, who may ſo eaſily, even by ſetting himſelf in his Chair and reviewing his Theo- rems, be cured :) it is alſo againſt a very great experience: For beſides the former Allegations it is moſt notorious, that Pope *Alexander III.* in a Council at *Rome* of 300 Archbiſhops and Biſhops *A. D.* 1179. condemn'd *Peter Lombard* of hereſy in a matter of great concernment, no leſs than ſomething about the incarnation; from which ſentence he was, after 36 years abiding it, abſolved by Pope *Innocent III.* without re- pentance or dereliction of the opinion: Now if this ſentence was not a Cathedral Dictate, as

De Co-
di. cap. 5.

De Pontif.
Rom. c. 14.
§ respondeo.
In 3 sent. d. 24.
q. in con. 6.
dub. 6. in fine.

* Proverbiali-
ter olim di-
ctum erat de
Decretalibus.
Male cum re-
bus humanis
allum esse, ex
quo decretis a-
la acceſſerunt.
ſcil. cum De-
cretales poſt
decretum Gra-
tiani ſub nomi-
ne Gregorii no-
ni edebantur.

De Auth rit.
Eccleſ. cap. 10.
in ſing.

ſolemn and great as could be expected, or as is ſaid to be neceſſary to oblige all Chriſtendom, let the great Hyperaſpiſts of the Roman Church be Judges, who tell us that a particular Council with the Popes confirmation is made Oecumenical by adoption, and is infallible and obliges all Chriſtendom; ſo *Bellarmino*: And therefore he ſayes, that it is *temerarium, erroneum, & proximum hæreſi*, to deny it, but whether it be or not it is all one, as to my purpoſe: For it is certain that in a particular Council confirm'd by the Pope, if ever; then and there the Pope ſat himſelf in his Chair, and it is as certain that he ſate beſides the cuſhion and determined ridiculous and falſly in this caſe: But this is a device for which there is no Scripture, no Tradition, no one dogmatical reſolute ſaying of any Father, Greek or Latin, for above 1000 years after Chriſt: And themſelves when they liſt can acknowledge as much. And therefore *Bellarmino's* ſaying, I perceive is believed by them to be true: That there are many things in the * Decretal Epistles, which make not Articles to be *de fide*. And therefore, *Non eſt neceſſario credendum determinatis per ſummum Pontificem*, ſays *Almain*: And this ſerves their turns in every thing they do not like, and therefore I am reſolved it ſhall ſerve my turn alſo for ſome thing, and that is, that the matter of the Pope's infallibility is ſo ridiculous and improbable, that they do not believe it themſelves: Some of them clearly practiſed the contrary, and although Pope *Leo X.* hath determined the Pope to be above a Council, yet the *Sorbon* to this day ſcorn it at the very heart. And I might urge upon them that ſcorn that *Almain* truly enough by way of Argument alledges. It is a wonder

wonder that they who affirm the Pope cannot err in judgment, do not alſo affirm that he cannot ſin: they are like enough to ſay ſo ſays he, if the vitious lives of the Popes did not make a daily confutation of ſuch flattery: Now for my own particular, I am as confident and think it as certain that Popes are actually deceived in matters of Chriſtian Doctrin, as that they do prevaricate the laws of Chriſtian Piety: And therefore † *Alphonſus à Caſtro* calls them *impudentes Papæ aſſentatores*, that aſcribe to him infallibility in judgment, or interpretation of Scripture.

† L. I. c. 4.
adverſ. heret.
edit. Paris
1534. Inſeqq.
non expurgan-
tur iſta verba.
at idem ſenſus
manet.

But if themſelves did believe it heartily, what Numb. 11.
excuse is there in the world, for the ſtrange uncharitableneſs or ſupine negligence of the Popes, that they do not ſet themſelves in their Chair and write infallible Commentaries, and determine all Controverſies without error, and blaſt all heresies with the word of their mouth, declare what is and what is not *de fide*, that his Diſciples and Confidants may agree upon it; reconcile the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, and expound all Myſteries? for it cannot be imagined but he that was endued with ſo ſupreme power in order to ſo great ends, was alſo fitted with proportionable, that is extraordinary perſonal abilities, ſucceeding and deriv'd upon the perſons of all the Popes. And then the Doctours of his Church, need not trouble themſelves with ſtudy, nor writing explications of Scripture, but might wholly attend to practical devotion, and leave all their Scholaſtical wranglings, the diſtinguiſhing opinions of their Orders, and they might have a fine Church, ſomething like Fairy land or *Lucian's Kingdom* in the Moon: But if they ſay they cannot do this when they liſt,

liſt, but when they are mov'd to it by the Spirit, then we are never the nearer; for ſo may the Biſhop of *Angoleſme* write infallible Commentaries when the holy Ghoſt moves him to it, for I ſuppoſe his motions are not ineffectual, but he will ſufficiently aſſiſt us in performing of what he actually moves us to: But among ſo many hundred Decrees which the Popes of *Rome* have made or confirmed and attested (which is all one) I would fain know in how many of them did the holy Ghoſt aſſiſt them? If they know it, let them declare it, that it may be certain which of their Decretals are *de fide*; for as yet none of his own Church knows: If they do not know, then neither can we know it from them, and then we are as uncertain as ever, and beſides, the holy Ghoſt may poſſibly move him, and he by his ignorance of it may neglect ſo profitable a motion, and then his promiſe of infallible aſſiſtance will be to very little purpoſe, becauſe it is with very much fallibility applicable to practice. And therefore it is abſolutely uſeleſs to any man or any Church, becauſe, ſuppoſe it ſettled in *Theſi*, that the Pope is infallible, yet whether he will do his duty, and perform thoſe conditions of being aſſiſted which are required of him, or whether he be a ſecret Simoniack (for if he be, he is *ipſo facto*, no Pope) or whether he be a Biſhop, or Priest, or a Chriſtian, being all uncertain; every one of theſe depending upon the intention and power of the Baptizer or Ordainer, which alſo are fallible, becauſe they depend upon the honeſty and power of other men we cannot be infallibly certain of any Pope that he is infallible, and therefore when our Questions are determin'd we are never the nearer, but may hug our ſelves in an
imaginary

imaginary truth, the certainty of finding truth out depending upon so many fallible and contingent circumstances. And therefore, the thing, if it were true, being so to no purpose, it is to be presum'd that God never gave a power so impertinently, and from whence no benefit can accrue to the Christian Church, for whose use and benefit, if at all, it must needs have been appointed.

But I am too long in this impertinency : If I *Numb. 18.* were bound to call any man Master upon earth, and to believe him upon his own affirmative and authority : I would of all men least follow him that pretends he is infallible and cannot prove it. For that he cannot prove it, makes me as uncertain as ever, and that he pretends to infallibility makes him careless of using such means which will morally secure those wise persons, who knowing their own aptness to be deceiv'd, use what endeavours they can to secure themselves from error, and so become the better and more probable guides.

Well ! ' Thus far we are come : Although we *Numb. 19.* are secured in fundamental points from involuntary error, by the plain, exprefs, and dogmatical places of Scripture, yet in other things we are not but may be invincibly mistaken, because of the obscurity and difficulty in the controverted parts of Scripture, by reason of the uncertainty of the means of its Interpretation, since Tradition is of an uncertain reputation, and sometimes evidently false, Councils are contradictory to each other, and therefore certainly are equally deceiv'd many of them, and therefore all may ; and then the Popes of Rome are very likely to mislead us, but cannot ascertain us of truth in matter of Question ; and in this

this world we believe in part, and prophecy in part, and this imperfection shall never be done away till we be translated to a more glorious state; either we must throw our chances, and get truth by accident or predestination, or else we must lie safe in a mutual toleration, and private liberty of persuation, unless some other Anchor can be thought upon where we may fasten our floating Vessels, and ride safely.

S E C T. VIII.

Of the disability of Fathers or Writers Ecclesiastical, to determine our Questions, with certainty and Truth.

Numb. 1. **T**HERE are some that think they can determine all Questions in the world by two or three sayings of the Fathers, or by the consent of so many as they will please to call a concurrent Testimony: But this consideration will soon be at an end; for if the Fathers, when they are witnesses of Tradition do not always speak truth as it hapned in the case of *Papias* and his numerous Followers for almost three Ages together, then is their Testimony more improbable when they dispute or write Commentaries.

Numb. 2. 2. The Fathers of the first Ages spake unitedly concerning divers Questions of secret Theology, and yet were afterwards contradicted by one personage of great reputation, whose credit had so much influence upon the world, as to make the contrary opinion become popular; why

why then may not we have the ſame liberty, when ſo plain an uncertainty is in their perſuaſions, and ſo great contrariety in their Doctrines? But this is evident in the caſe of abſolute predeſtination, which till St. *Auſtin's* time no man preached, but all taught the contrary, and yet the reputation of this one excellent man altered the ſcene. But if he might diſſent from ſo General a Doctrine, why may not we do ſo too, it being pretended that he is ſo excellent a precedent to be followed, if we have the ſame reaſon? he had no more Authority nor diſpenſation to diſſent, than any Biſhop hath now. And therefore St. *Auſtin* hath dealt ingeniouſly, and as he took this liberty to himſelf, ſo he denies it not to others, but indeed forces them to preſerve their own liberty: And therefore when St. *Hierom* had a great mind to follow the Fathers in a point that he fancied, and the beſt ſecurity he had, was, *Patiaris me cum talibus errare*, St. *Auſtin* would not endure it, but answered his reaſon, and neglected the Authority. And therefore it had been moſt unreaſonable that we ſhould do that now, though in his behalf, which he towards greater perſonages (for ſo they were then) at that time judg'd to be unreaſonable. It is a plain reſeſſion from Antiquity, which was determin'd by the Council of Florence, *piorum animas purgatas, &c. mox in Cælum recipi, & intueri clarè ipſum Deum trinum & unum ſicuti eſt*: As who pleaſe to try, may ſee it dogmatically reſolved to the contrary by

(a) *Juſtin Martyr*, (b) *Iræneus*, by (c) *Origen*, (d) *St. Chryſoſtom*, (e) *Theodore*t, (f) *Arethas Caſarienſis*, (g) *Euthymius*, who may answer for the Greek Church, and it is plain that it was the opinion of the Greek Church by that great difficulty

(a) Q. 60. ad Christian.

(b) Lib. 5.

(c) Hom. 7. in Levit.

(d) Hom. 39. in 1 Cor.

(e) In c. 11. ad Heb.

(f) In c. 6. ad Apoc.

(g) In 16. c. Luc.

culty the Romans had of bringing the Greeks to subscribe to the *Florentine* Council, where the Latins acted their master-piece of wit and stratagem, the greatest that hath been till the famous and superpolitick design of *Trent*. And for the Latin Church, (h) *Tertullian*, (i) *St. Ambrose*, (k) *St. Austin*, (l) *St. Hilary*, (m) *Prudentius*, (n) *Lactantius*, (o) *Victorinus Martyr*, and (p) *St. Bernard* are known to be of opinion that the Souls of the Saints are in *abditis receptaculis*, & *exterioribus atris*, where they expect the resurrection of their bodies, and the glorification of their Souls, and though they all believe them to be happy, yet they enjoy not the beatifick Vision before the resurrection: Now there being so full a consent of Fathers (for many more may be added) and the Decree of Pope *John XXII.* besides, who was so confident for his Decree that he commanded the University of *Paris* to swear that they would preach it and no other, and that none should be promoted to degrees in Theology, that did not swear the like, (as (q) *Occham*, (r) *Gerson*, (s) *Marsilius* and (t) *Adrianus* report :) Since it is esteemed lawful to dissent from all these, I hope no man will be so unjust to press other men to consent to an Authority which he himself judges to be incompetent. These two great instances are enough, but if more were necessary I could instance in the opinion of the *Chiliasm*, maintained by the second and third Centuries, and disavowed ever since: in the Doctrine of communicating Infants, taught and practised as necessary by the fourth and fifth Centuries, and detested by the Latin Church in all the following Ages: in the variety of opinions concerning the very form of baptizing, some keeping close to the institution and the

(h) Lib. 4.
adv. Mar.

(i) L. 2. de
Cain. c. 2.

(k) Ep. III. ad
Fortunatianum.

(l) In Psal.
138.

(m) De exeq.
defunctor.

(n) L. 7. c. 21.

(o) Inc. 6. A.
Poc.

(p) Serm. 3. de
om. sanctis.

Vid. enim St.
Aug. in En-
chir. c. 108.

& l. 12. de ci-
vit. Dei. c. 9.

& in Ps. 36.

& in l. 1. re-
tract. c. 14.

Vid. insuper
testimonia qua
collegit. Spala.

l. 5. c. 8. n. 98.

de re b. Eccl.
& Sixt. Senen.

l. 6. annot. 345.

(q) In oper. 90.
dierum.

(r) Serm. de
Paschal.

(s) In 1. sent.
q. 13. a. 3.

(t) In 4. de
Sacram. confir-
mat.

words of its firſt ſanction, others affirming it to be ſufficient, if it be adminiſtered *in nomine Chriſti*; particularly St. *Ambroſe*, Pope *Nicholas* the Firſt, * *V. Bede* and † *St. Bernard* beſides ſome Writers of after Ages as *Hugo de S. Victore*, and the Doctours generally his contemporaries. And it would not be inconfiderable to obſerve, that if any Synod, General, National, or Provincial, be receded from by the Church of the later Age, (as there have been very many) then, ſo many Fathers as were then aſſembled and united in opinion are eſteemed no Authority to determine our perſuaſions. Now ſuppoſe 200 Fathers aſſembled in ſuch a Council, if all they had writ Books, and Authorities, 200 Authorities had been alledged in confirmation of an opinion, it would have made a mighty noiſe, and loaded any man with an inſupportable prejudice that ſhould diſſent: And yet every opinion maintained againſt the Authority of any one Council, though but Provincial, is in its proportion ſuch a violent reſeſſion and neglect of the Authority and doctrine of ſo many Fathers as were then aſſembled, who did as much declare their opinion in thoſe Aſſemblies by their Suffrages, as if they had writ it in ſo many books; and their opinion is more conſiderable in the Aſſembly than in their writings, becauſe it was more deliberate, aſſiſted, united and more dogmatical. In purſuance of this obſervation, it is to be noted by way of inſtance, that St. *Auſtin* and two hundred and ſeventeen Biſhops and all their * Succeſſors for a whole age together did conſent in denying appeals to *Rome*; and yet the Authority of ſo

*De consecrat.
diſt. 4. c. 2.
quod in Judeo.
• Inc. 10. Aſſ.
† Ep. 3. 0.*

• Vid. Ep. Bonifacii II. apud Nicolinum, Tom. 2. Concil. pag. 544 & exemplar precum Eulalii apud eundem. ibid. p. 525. Qui anathematiz-

*ant omnes decifores ſuos qui in ea cauſa Roma ſe opponendo recta fidei regulam pravaricati ſunt, inter quos tamen fuit Auguſtinus quem pro maledicto Calſtinus tacite agnoſcit, admittendo ſc. exemplar precum. Vid. Doct. Marta, de juridi-
part. p. 273. & Eraſm. annot. in Hieron. præfat. in Daniel.*

many

De verb. Dei
l. 3. c. 10. §
diceſ.

many Fathers (all true Catholicks) is of no force now at *Rome* in this Queſtion ; but if it be in a matter they like, one of theſe Fathers alone is ſufficient. The Doctrin of St. *Auſtin* alone brought in the feſtival and veneration of the aſſumption of the bleſſed Virgin, and the hard ſentence paſſed at *Rome* upon unbaptized Infants and the *Dominican* opinion concerning prede-termination, derived from him alone as from their Original : ſo that if a Father ſpeaks for them, it is wonderful to ſee what Tragedies are ſtirred up againſt them that diſſent, as is to be ſeen in that excellent nothing of *Campion's* ten reaſons. But if the Fathers be againſt them, then *Patres in quibusdam non leviter lapſi ſunt* ſays *Bellarmino*, and *conſtat quosdam ex præcipuis*, it is certain the chiefeſt of them have foully erred. Nay, *Poſa*, *Salmeron*, and *Wadding* in the Queſtion of the immaculate conception make no ſcruple to diſſent from Antiquity ; to prefer new Doctors before the Old, and to juſtifie themſelves, bring inſtances in which the Church of *Rome* had determin'd againſt the Fathers. And it is not excuſe enough to ſay that ſingly the Fathers may err, but if they concur they are certain Teſtimony. For there is no queſtion this day diſputed by perſons that are willing to be tryed by the Fathers, ſo generally attested on either ſide, as ſome points are which both ſides diſlike ſeverally or conjunctly. And therefore 'tis not honeſt for either ſide to preſs the Authority of the Fathers, as a concluding Argument in matter of diſpute, unleſs themſelves will be content to ſubmit in all things to the Teſtimony of an equal number of them, which I am certain neither ſide will do.

3. If I should reckon all the particular reasons against the certainty of this topick, it would be more than needs as to this Question, and therefore I will abstain from all disparagement of those worthy Personages, who were excellent lights to their severall Dioceses, and Cures. And therefore I will not instance that *Clemens Alexandrinus* taught that Christ felt no hunger or thirst, but eat only to make demonstration of the verity of his humane nature: Nor that *St. Hilary* taught that Christ in his sufferings had no sorrow; nor that *Origen* taught the pains of Hell not to have an eternal duration: Nor that *St. Cyprian* taught rebaptization; nor that *Athenagoras* condemned second marriages; nor that *St. John Damascen* said, Christ only prayed in appearance, not really and in truth; I will let them all rest in peace, and their memories in honour; for if I should enquire into the particular probations of this Article, I must do to them as I should be forced to do now; if any man should say that the Writings of the School-men were excellent Argument and Authority to determine mens persuasions; I must consider their writings and observe their defaultances, their contradictions, the weakness of their Arguments, the mis-allegations of Scripture, their inconsequent deductions, their false opinions, and all the weaknesses of humanity, and the failings of their persons, which no good man is willing to do unless he be compell'd to it by a pretence that they are infallible; or that they are followed by men even into errors or impiety. And therefore since there is enough in the former instances, to cure any such mispersuasion and prejudice, I will not instance in the innumerable

Strom. 1. 1.
c. 6.

particularities that might persuade us to keep our Liberty intire or to use it discreetly. For it is not to be denyed but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, & *probabile est quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod sapientibus videtur*; If one wise man says a thing, it is an Argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation, that is, proportionable to such an assent as the Authority of a wise man can produce, and when there is nothing against it that is greater; and so in proportion higher and higher as more wise men (such as the old Doctors were) do affirm it. But that which I complain of is that we look upon wise men that lived long ago with so much veneration and mistake, that we reverence them not for having been wise men, but that they lived long since. But when the Question is concerning Authority, there must be something to build it on; a Divine Commandment, humane Sanction, excellency of spirit, and greatness of understanding, on which things all humane Authority is regularly built. But now if we had lived in their times (for so we must look upon them now, as they did who without prejudice beheld them) I suppose we should then have beheld them, as we in *England* look on those Prelates, who are of great reputation for learning and sanctity; here only is the difference; when persons are living, their authority is depressed by their personal defaillances, and the contrary interests of their contemporaries, which disband when they are dead, and leave their credit intire upon the reputation of those excellent Books, and monuments of Learning and Piety which are left behind: But beyond this why the Bishop of *Hippo* shall have greater Authority than the

the Bishop of the *Canaries*, *ceteris paribus*, I understand not. For did they that liv'd (to instance) in St. *Austin's* time believe all that he wrote? If they did, they were much to blame, or else himself was to blame for retracting much of it a little before his death; And if while he lived, his affirmative was no more Authority, than derives from the credit of one very wise man, against whom also very wise men were opposed; I know not why his Authority should prevail further now; For there is nothing added to the strength of his reason, since that time, but only that he hath been in great esteem with posterity: And if that be all, why the opinion of the following Ages, shall be of more force than the opinion of the first Ages, against whom St. *Austin* in many things clearly did oppose himself, I see no reason; or whether the first Ages were against him or no, yet that he is approved by the following Ages is no better Argument; for it makes his Authority not to be innate, but derived from the opinion of others, and so to be *precaria*, and to depend upon others, who if they should change their opinions, and such examples there have been many, then there were nothing left to urge our consent to him; which when it was at the best, was only this, because he had the good Fortune to be believed by them that came after, he must be so still; and because it was no Argument for the old Doctors before him, this will not be very good in his behalf: The same I say of any company of them, I say not so of all of them, it is to no purpose to say it, for there is no Question this day in contestation, in the explication of which all the old Writers did consent: In the assignation of the Canon of Scripture,

they never did conſent for ſix hundred years together, and then by that time the Biſhops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently, upon that, they fell out in twenty more; and except it be in the Apoſtles Creed, and Articles of ſuch nature, there is nothing which may with any colour be called a conſent, much leſs Tradition Univerſal.

Numb. 4.

4. But I will rather chuſe to ſhew the uncertainty of this Topick by ſuch an Argument, which was not in the Fathers power to help, ſuch as makes no invaſion upon their great reputation, which I deſire ſhould be preſerved as ſacred as it ought. For other things, let who pleaſe read Mr. *Daillé du vray uſage des Peres*; But I ſhall only conſider that the Writings of the Fathers have been ſo corrupted by the intermixture of Hereticks, ſo many falſe books put forth in their names, ſo many of their Writings loſt which would more clearly have explicated their ſenſe, and at laſt an open profeſſion made, and a trade of making the Fathers ſpeak, not what themſelves thought, but what other men pleaſed, that it is a great inſtance of God's providence and care of his Church, that we have ſo much good preſerved in the Writings which we receive from the Fathers, and that all truth is not as clear gone, as is the certainty of their great Authority and reputation.

Numb. 5.

The publiſhing Books with the inſcription of great names began in St. *Paul's* time; for ſome had troubled the Church of *Theſſalonica* with a falſe Epiſtle in St. *Paul's* name againſt the inconvenience of which he arms them in 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 1. And this increaſed daily in the Church.

Apolog. Athanaſ. ad Conſtantin.

The *Arrians* wrote an Epiſtle to *Conſtantine*, under the name of *Athanaſius*, and the *Eutychians* wrote

wrote againſt Cyril of Alexandria under the name of *Theodoret*; and of the Age in which the ſeventh Synod was kept, *Erasmus* reports, *Libris falſo celebrium virorum titulo commendatis ſcatere omnia*. It was then a publick buſineſs, and a trick not more baſe than publick: But it was more ancient than ſo, and it is memorable in the Books attributed to *St. Baſil*, containing thirty Chapters *de Spiritu Sancto*, whereof fifteen were plainly added by another hand under the covert of *St. Baſil*, as appears in the difference of the ſtile, in the impertinent digreſſions, againſt the cuſtom of that excellent man, by ſome paſſages contradictory to others of *St. Baſil*, by citing *Meletius* as dead before him, who yet lived three * years after him, and by the very frame and manner of the diſcourſe; and yet it was ſo handſomly carried, and ſo well ſerv'd the purpoſes of men, that it was quoted under the title of *St. Baſil* by many, but without naming the number of chapters, and by *St. John Damascen* in theſe words, *Baſilius in opere triginta capitum de Spiritu S. ad Amphilochium*, and to the ſame purpoſe, and in the number of 27 and 29. chapters he it is cited by * *Photius*, by *Euthymius*, by *Burchard*, by *Zonaras*, *Balſamon* and *Nicephorus*; but for this ſee more in *Erasmus's* Preface upon this Book of *St. Baſil*. There is an Epiſtle goes ſtill under the name of *St. Hierom ad Demetriadem virginem*, and is of great uſe in the Queſtion of Predeſtination, with its appendices, and yet a very † learned man 800 years ago did believe it to be written by a *Pelagian*, and undertakes to confute divers parts of it, as being high and confident *Pelagianiſm*, and written by *Julianus Epiſc. Eclanenſis*, but *Gregorius Ariminenſis* from *St. Auſtin* affirms it

Vid. Baron. A.D. 553.

* *Vid. Baron. in Annal.*

L. I. de imagin. orat. I.

* *Nomocan. tit. I. cap. 3.*

† *V. Beda de gratia Chriſti adv. Julianum.*

Greg. Arim. in 2. ſent. deſt. 26. q. 1. 2. 1.

to have been written by *Pelagius* himſelf. I might inſtance in too many; There is not any one of the Fathers who is eſteemed Author of any conſiderable number of Books, that hath eſcaped untouched; But the abuſe in this kind hath been ſo evident that now if any intereſſed perſon of any ſide be preſſed with an Authority very pregnant againſt him, he thinks to eſcape by accuſing the Edition, or the Author, or the hands it paſſed through, or at laſt he therefore ſuſpects it, becauſe it makes againſt him: both ſides being reſolv'd that they are in the right, the Authorities that they admit, they will believe not to be againſt them; and they which are too plainly againſt them, ſhall be no Authorities: And indeed the whole world hath been ſo much abuſed that every man thinks he hath reaſon to ſuſpect whatſoever is againſt him, that is, what he pleaſe; which proceeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability in ſuch Allegations.

Numb. 6.

But there is a worſe miſchief than this, beſides thoſe very many which are not yet diſcovered, which like the peſtilence deſtroys in the dark, and grows into inconvenience more inſenſibly and more irremediably, and that is, corruption of particular places, by inserting words and altering them to contrary ſenſes: A thing which the Fathers of the ſixth General Synod complain'd of concerning the conſtitutions of St. Clement, *quibus jam olim ab iis qui a fidè aliena ſentiunt adulterina quedam etiam pietate aliena introducta ſunt quæ divinorum nobis Decretorum elegantem & venuſtam ſpeciem obſcurarunt*: And ſo alſo have his Recognitions, ſo have his Epiſtles been uſed, if at leaſt they were his at all,
particu-

Can. 2.

particularly the fifth Decretal Epistle that goes under the name of St. Clement, in which community of Wives is taught upon the Authority of St. Luke saying the first Christians had all things common; if all things, then Wives also sayes the Epistle; a forgery like to have been done by some *Nicolaitan*, or other impure person: There is an Epistle of Cyril extant to *Succensus* Bishop of *Diocæsarea*, in which he relates that he was asked by *Budus* Bishop of *Emessa*, whether he did approve of the Epistle of *Athanasius* to *Epiætetus* Bishop of *Corinth*, and that his answer was, *Si hæc apud vos scripta non sint adultera: Nam plura ex his ab hostibus Ecclesiæ deprehenduntur esse depravata:* And this was done even while the Authors themselves were alive; for so *Dionysius* of *Corinth* complain'd that his writings were corrupted by Hereticks, and Pope *Leo*, that his Epistle to *Flavianus* was perverted by the Greeks: And in the Synod of *Constantinople* before quoted (the sixth Synod) *Macarius* and his Disciples were convicted *quod Sanctorum testimonia aut truncârunt aut depravârunt*: Thus the third Chapter of St. *Cyprian's* Book *de unitate Ecclesiæ* in the Edition of *Pamelius* suffered great alteration: These words [*Primatus Petro datur*] wholly inserted, and these [*super Cathedram Petri fundata est Ecclesia*] and whereas it was before, *super unum edificat Ecclesiam Christus*, that not being enough they have made it *super [illum] unum*. Now these Additions are against the faith of all old Copies, before *Minutius* and *Pamelius*, and against *Gratian*, even after himself had been chastiz'd by the Roman Correctors, the Commissaries of *Gregory XIII.* as is to be seen where these words are alledged, *Decret. c. 24. Q. 1.*

Emess. l. 4. c. 23.

Act. 8. vid. etiam Synod. 7. act. 4.

Annot. Cyprian.
an. ſuper. Con-
cil. Carthag.
p. 2.

can. loquitur Dominus ad Petrum. So that we may ſay of Cyprian's works as *Pamelius* himſelf ſaid concerning his writings and the writings of other of the Fathers, *unde colligimus* (ſaith he) *Cypriani ſcripta ut & aliorum Veterum à librariis variè fuiſſe interpolata.* But *Gratian* himſelf could do as fine a feat when he liſted, or elſe ſome body did it for him, and it was in this very Queſtion, their beloved Article of the Popes Supremacy; for *de pœnit. diſt. 1. c. poteſt fieri.* he quotes theſe words out of *St. Ambroſe*, *Non habent Petri hæreditatem qui non habent Petri ſedem; fidem,* not *ſedem*, it is in *St. Ambroſe*; but this error was made authentick by being inſerted into the Code of the Law of the Catholick Church; and conſidering how little notice the Clergy had of Antiquity, but what was tranſmitted to them by *Gratian*, it will be no great wonder that all this part of the world ſwallowed ſuch a bole and the opinion that was wrapped in it. But I need not inſtance in *Gratian* any further, but refer any one that deſires to be ſatiſfied concerning this Collection of his, to *Auguſtinus* Archbiſhop of *Tarracon* in *emendatione Gratiani*, where he ſhall find fopperies and corruptions good ſtore noted by that learned man: But that the *Indices Expurgatorii* commanded by Authority, and practiſed with publick licence profeſs to alter and correct the ſayings of the Fathers and to reconcile them to the Catholick ſenſe by putting in and leaving out, is ſo great an Impoſture, ſo unchriſtian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all Books and all Authors juſtly to be ſuſpected; For conſidering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had moſt of the Copies in their own hands, together with an unſatiſfiable deſire of prevailing in their

Vid. ind. Expurg. Belg. in Bertram. & Fland. Hiſpan. Portugal. Neapolitan. Romanum. Junium in præfat. ad Ind. Expurg. Belg. Haſenſenſium, p. 275. Wihling-ton Apolog. num. 449.

their right or in their wrong, they have made an absolute destruction of this Topick, and when the Fathers speak * Latin or breath in a Roman Dioceſs, although the providence of God does infinitely over-rule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the Monuments of Antiquity, there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which indeed is infinitely inconsiderable: Yet our Questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latines always complain'd of the Greeks for privately corrupting the Ancient Records both of Councils and † Fathers, and now the Latins make open profession not of corrupting, but of correcting their writings (that is the word) and at the most it was but a humane Authority, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived; the whole matter is so unreasonable, that it is not worth a further disquisition. But if any one desires to enquire further, he may be satisfied in *Erasmus*, in *Henry* and *Robert Stephens*, in the Prefaces before the Editions of Fathers, and their Observation upon them: in *Bellarmino de script. Eccles.* in Dr. *Reynolds, de libris Apocryphis*, in *Scaliger*, and *Robert Coke of Leeds in York-shire*, in his Book *de Censura Patrum*.

* Vid. *Lector Andreæ Crevierii in Bel-lo Jesuitico, & Joh. Reynolds in lib. de Idol. Rom.*

† Vid. *Ep. Nicolai ad Michael. Imperat.*

SECT.

S E C T. IX.

Of the incompetency of the Church in its diffusive capacity to be judge of Controversies, and the impertinency of that pretence of the Spirit.

Numb. i.

AND now after all these considerations of the several Topicks, Tradition, Councils, Popes and ancient Doctors of the Church, I suppose it will not be necessary, to consider the authority of the Church apart. For the Church either speaks by Tradition, or by a representative Body in a Council, by Popes or by the Fathers: For the Church is not a *Chimera*, not a shadow but a company of Men believing in Jesus Christ, which Men either speak by themselves immediately, or by their Rulers, or by their Proxies and Representatives; now I have considered it in all senses but in its diffusive capacity; in which capacity she cannot be supposed to be a Judge of Controversies, both because in that capacity she cannot teach us, as also because if by a Judge we mean all the Church diffused in all its parts and members, so there can be no controversy, for if all men be of that opinion, then there is no question contested; if they be not all of a mind, how can the whole diffusive Catholic Church be pretended in defiance of any one article, where the diffusive Church being divided, part goes this way, and part another? But if it be said the greatest part must carry it; Besides that it is impossible for us to know which way the greatest part goes in many questions, it is not always true that the greater part is the best, sometimes the contrary is most certain, and it is often

very

very probable, but it is always poſſible. And when paucity of followers was objected to *Liberius*, he gave this in answer, There was a time when but three Children of the Captivity reſiſted the Kings Decree. And *Athanaſius* wrote on pur-
Theod. 1. 2. c.
16. hiſt.
Tom. 2.

But if there could in this caſe be any diſtinct
Numb. 2.
 conſideration of the Church, yet to know which is the true Church is ſo hard to be found out, that the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom are judg'd before you can get to your Judge, and then there is no need of him. For thoſe queſtions which are concerning the Judge of queſtions muſt be determined before you can ſubmit to his Judgment, and if you can your ſelves determine thoſe great queſtions which conſiſt much in univerſalities, then alſo you may determine the particulars as being of leſs difficulty. And he that conſiders how many notes there are given to know the true Church, no leſs than 15 by *Bellarmino*, and concerning every one of them almoſt whether it be a certain note or no there are very many queſtions and uncertainties, and when it is reſolved which are the notes, there is more diſpute about the application of theſe notes than of the *Πρωτοκρινόμενον*, will quickly be ſatiſf'd that he had better ſit ſtill than to go round about a difficult and troubleſome paſſage, and at laſt get no further, but return to the place from whence he firſt ſet out. And there is one note amongſt the reſt, Holineſs of Doctrine, that is, ſo as to have nothing falſe either in *Doctrina fidei* or *morum*, (for ſo *Bellarmino* explicates it) which ſuppoſes all your Controverſies, judged before they can be
 tryed

tryed by the Authority of the Church, and when we have found out all true Doctrines (for that is neceſſary to judge of the Church by, that as St. *Auſtin's* council is *Eccleſiam in verbis Chriſti inveſtigemus*) then we are bound to follow becauſe we judge it true, not becauſe the Church hath ſaid it, and this is to judge of the Church by her Doctrine, not of the Doctrine by the Church. And indeed it is the beſt and only way; But then how to judge of that Doctrine will be afterwards inquired into. In the mean time, the Church, that is, the Governours of the Churches are to judge for themſelves, and for all thoſe who cannot judge for themſelves. For others, they muſt know that their Governours judge for them too, ſo as to keep them in peace and obedience, tho' not for the determination of their private perſuaſions. For the Oeconomy of the Church requires that her Authority be received by all her Children. Now this Authority is divine in its original, for it derives immediately from Chriſt, but it is humane in its miniſtration. We are to be led like Men not like beaſts; a rule is preſcrib'd for the Guides themſelves to follow, as we are to follow the Guides; and although in matters indeterminable or ambiguous the preſumption lies on behalf of the Governours, (for we do nothing for authority if we ſuffer it not to weigh that part down of an indifferency and a queſtion which ſhe chooſes) yet if there be *error manifeſtus*, as it often happens, or if the Church-Governours themſelves be rent into innumerable ſects, as it is this day in Chriſtendom, then we are to be as wiſe as we can in chooſing our Guides, and then to follow ſo long as that reaſon remains for which we firſt choſe them. And even in that Government which was an immediate ſanction of God, I mean the Ec-
cleſi-

cliaſtical government of the Synagogue, where God had conſign'd the High Priests authority with a menace of death to them that ſhould diſobey, that all the world might know the meaning and extent of ſuch precepts, and that there is a limit beyond which they cannot command, and we ought not to obey; it came once to that paſs, that if the Prieſt had been obeyed in his Conciliary degrees, the whole Nation had been bound to believe the condemnation of our bleſſed Saviour to have been juſt, and at another time the Apoſtles muſt no more have preached in the name of JESUS. But here was manifeſt error. And the caſe is the ſame to every man that invincibly and therefore innocently believes it ſo. *Deo potius quàm hominibus* is our rule in ſuch caſes. For although every Man is bound to follow his Guide, unleſs he believes his Guide to miſlead him; yet when he ſees reaſon againſt his Guide, it is beſt to follow his reaſon: For though in this he may fall into error, yet he will eſcape the ſin; he may do violence to truth, but never to his own conſcience; and an honeſt error is better than an hypocritical profeſſion of truth, or a violent luxation of the underſtanding, ſince if he retains his honeſty and ſimplicity, he cannot err in a matter of Faith or abſolute neceſſity; Gods goodneſs hath ſecur'd all honeſt and careful perſons from that; for other things, he muſt follow the beſt Guides he can, and he cannot be obliged to follow better than God hath given him.

And there is yet another way pretended of infallible Expositions of Scripture, and that is, by the Spirit. But of this I ſhall ſay no more, but that it is impertinent as to this queſtion. For put caſe the Spirit is given to ſome men enabling them to expound infallibly, yet becauſe this is but a private

Numb. 3.

vate assistance, and cannot be proved to others, this infallible assistance may determine my own assent, but shall not enable me to prescribe to others, because it were unreasonable I should, unless I could prove to him that I have the Spirit, and so can secure him from being deceived, if he relies upon me. In this case I may say as St. Paul in the case of praying with the Spirit, *He verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified.* So that let this pretence be as true as it will, it is sufficient that it cannot be of consideration in this question.

Numb. 4.

The result of all this; Since it is not reasonable to limit and to prescribe to all Mens understandings by any external rule in the interpretation of difficult places of Scripture which is our rule: Since no Man nor company of Men is secure from error, or can secure us that they are free from malice, interest and design; and since all the ways by which we usually are taught, as Tradition, Councils, Decretals, &c. are very uncertain in the matter, in their authority, in their being legitimate and natural, and many of them certainly false, and nothing certain but the divine authority of Scripture, in which all that is necessary is plain, and a much of that that is not necessary is very obscure, intricate and involv'd, either we must set up our rest, only upon Articles of Faith, and plain places, and be incurious of other obscurer revelations, (which is a duty for persons of private understandings, and of no publick function) or if we will search further (to which in some measure the Guides of others are obliged) it remains we inquire how Men may determine themselves, so as to do their duty to God, and not to disserve the Church, that every such man may do what he is bound to, in his personal capacity, and as he relates to the publick as a publick minister.

S E C T.

S E C T. X.

Of the authority of Reason, and that it proceeding upon beſt grounds is the beſt judge.

HERE then I conſider, that although no Man *Numb. 1.* may be truſted to judge for all others, unleſs this perſon were infallible and authorized ſo to do, which no Man nor no company of Men is, yet every Man may be truſted to judge for himſelf, I ſay every Man that can judge at all, (as for others they are to be ſaved as it pleaſeth God) but others that can judge at all muſt either chooſe their Guides who ſhall judge for them, (and then they oftentimes do the wiſeſt, and always ſave themſelves a labour, but then they chooſe too) or if they be perſons of greater underſtanding, then they are to chooſe for themſelves in particular, what the others do in general, and by chooſing their guide; and for this any Man may be better truſted for himſelf than any Man can be for another: For in this caſe his own intereſt is moſt concerned; and ability is not ſo neceſſary as honeſty, which certainly every Man will beſt preſerve in his own caſe, and to himſelf, (and if he does not, it's he that muſt ſmart for it) and it is not required of us not to be in error, but that we endeavour to avoid it.

2. He that follows his Guide ſo far as his rea- *Numb. 2.* ſon goes along with him, or which is all one, he that follows his own reaſon (not guided only by natural Arguments, but by Divine Revelation, and all other good means) hath great advantages over him that gives himſelf wholly to follow any humane Guide whaſoever, becauſe he follows
all

all their reaſons and his own too; he follows them till reaſon leaves them, or till it ſeems ſo to him, which is all one to his particular, for by the confeſſion of all ſides, an erroneous Conſcience binds him, when a right guide does not bind him. But he that gives himſelf up wholly to a guide is oftentimes (I mean, if he be a diſcerning perſon) forc'd to do violence to his own underſtanding, and to loſe all the benefit of his own diſcretion, that he may reconcile his reaſon to his guide. And of this we ſee infinite inconveniences in the Church of *Rome*, for we find perſons of great underſtanding, oftentimes ſo amuſed with the authority of their Church, that it is pity to ſee them ſweat in answering ſome objections, which they know not how to do, but yet believe they muſt, becauſe the Church hath ſaid it. So that if they read, ſtudy, pray, ſearch records, and uſe all the means of art and induſtry in the purſuit of truth, it is not with a reſolution to follow that which ſhall ſeem truth to them, but to confirm what before they did believe: and if any argument ſhall ſeem unanſwerable againſt any Article of their Church, they are to take it for a temptation, not for an illumination, and they are to uſe it accordingly: which makes them make the Devil to be the Author of that which God's Spirit hath aſſiſted them to find in the uſe of lawful means and the ſearch of truth. And when the Devil of falſhood is like to be caſt out by Gods Spirit, they ſay that it is through *Beelzebub*; which was one of the worſt things that ever the Pharifees ſaid or did: And was it not a plain ſtifling of the juſt and reaſonable demands made by the Emperour, by the Kings of *France* and *Spain*, and by the ableſt Divines among them which was uſed in the Council of

Trent

Trent, when they demanded the reſtitution of Priests to their liberty of marriage, the use of the Chalice, the Service in the vulgar Tongue, and these things not only in pursuance of Truth, but for other great and good ends, even to take away an infinite scandal and a great schism? And yet when they themselves did profess it, and all the world knew these reasonable demands were denied meerly upon a politick consideration, yet that these things should be fram'd into articles, and decrees of faith, and they for ever after bound not only not to desire the same things, but to think the contrary to be divine truths: never was Reason made more a slave or more useleſs. Must not all the world say, either they must be great hypocrites, or do great violence to their understanding, when they not only cease from their claim, but must also believe it to be unjust? If the use of their reason had not been restrained by the tyranny and imperiousness of their guide, what the Emperour, and the Kings and their Theologues would have done, they can best judge who consider the reasonableness of the demand, and the unreasonableness of the denial. But we see many wise men who with their *Optandum eſſet ut Eccleſia licentiam daret, &c.* proclaim to all the world, that in some things they consent and do not consent, and do not heartily believe what they are bound publicly to profess, and they themselves would clearly see a difference, if a contrary decree should be fram'd by the Church, they would with an infinite greater confidence rest themselves in other propositions than what they must believe as the case now stands, and they would find that the authority of a Church is a prejudice as often as a free and modest use of reason is a temptation.

Q

3. God

Numb. 3.

3. God will have no man preſſed with anothers inconveniences in matters ſpiritual and intellectual, no mans ſalvation to depend upon another, and every tooth that eats ſowre grapes ſhall be ſet on edge for it ſelf, and for none elſe: and this is remarkable in that ſaying of God by the Prophet, *If the Prophet ceases to tell my people of their ſins, and leads them into error, the people ſhall die in their ſins, and the blood of them I will require at the hands of that Prophet*: Meaning, that God hath ſo ſet the Prophets to guide us, that we alſo are to follow them by a voluntary aſſent by an act of choice and election. For although accidentally and occaſionally the ſheep may periſh by the ſhepherds fault, yet that which hath the chiefſt influence upon their final condition, is their own act and election, and therefore God hath ſo appointed guides to us, that if we periſh, it may be accounted upon both our ſcores, upon our own and the guides too, which ſays plainly, that although we are intruſted to our guides, yet we are intruſted to our ſelves too. Our guides muſt direct us, and yet if they fail, God hath not ſo left us to them, but he hath given us enough to our ſelves to diſcover their failings, and our own duties in all things neceſſary. And for other things we muſt do as well as we can. But it is beſt to follow our guides, if we know nothing better; but if we do, it is better to follow the pillar of fire, than a pillar of cloud, though both poſſibly may lead to *Canaan*: But then alſo it is poſſible that it may be otherwiſe. But I am ſure if I do my own beſt, then if it be beſt to follow a Guide, and if it be alſo neceſſary, I ſhall be ſure by Gods grace and my own endeavour, to get to it; But if I without the particular engagement of my own underſtanding, follow a guide,

Ezek. 33.

guide, poſſibly I may be guilty of extream negligence, or I may extinguish Gods Spirit, or do violence to my own reason. And whether intruſting my ſelf wholly with another, be not a laying up my talent in a napkin, I am not ſo well aſſured. I am certain the other is not. And ſince another mans anſwering for me will not hinder, but that I alſo ſhall anſwer for my ſelf; as it concerns him to ſee he does not wilfully miſguide me, ſo it concerns me to ſee that he ſhall not if I can help it, if I cannot it will not be required at my hands: whether it be his fault, or his invincible error, I ſhall be charg'd with neither.

4. This is no other than what is enjoyned as a *Numb. 4.* duty. For ſince God will be juſtified with a free obedience, and there is an obedience of underſtanding as well as of will and affection, it is of great concernment, as to be willing to believe whatever God ſays, ſo alſo to enquire diligently whether the will of God be ſo as is pretended. Even our acts of underſtanding are acts of choice, and therefore it is commanded as a duty, to ſearch *Mat. 15. 10.* *Joh. 5. 40.* *I Joh. 4. 1.* *Ephes. 5. 17.* *Luk. 24. 25.* *Rom. 3. 11.* *I. 28.* *Apo. 2. 2.* *Act. 17. 11.* the Scriptures, to try the ſpirits whether they be of God or no, of our ſelves to be able to judge what is right, to try all things, and to retain that which is beſt. For he that reſolves not to conſider, reſolves not to be careful whether he have truth or no, and therefore hath an affection indifferent to truth or falſhood, which is all one as if he did chooſe amiſs; and ſince when things are truly propounded and made reaſonable and intelligible we cannot but aſſent, and then it is no thanks to us; we have no way to give our wills to God in matters of belief, but by our induſtry in ſearching it and examining the grounds upon which the propounders build their dictates. And the not doing it is oftentimes a cauſe that God gives a

man over *ἐς τὴν ἀδύνατον*, into a reprobate and undiſcerning mind and underſtanding.

Numb. 5.

5. And this very thing (though men will not underſtand it) is the perpetual practice of all men in the world that can give a reaſonable account of their faith. The very Catholick Church

Lib. 3.

it ſelf is *rationalibus & ubiq; diffusa*, ſaith *Optatus*, reaſonable, as well as diffuſed, every where. For take the Proſelytes of the Church of *Rome*, even in their greateſt ſubmiſſion of underſtanding, they ſeem to themſelves to follow their reaſon moſt of all. For if you tell them, Scripture and Tradition are their rules to follow, they will believe you when they know a reaſon for it, and if they take you upon your word, they have a reaſon for that too, either they believe you a learned man, or a good man, or that you can have no ends upon them, or ſomething that is of an equal height to fit their underſtandings. If you tell them they muſt believe the Church, you muſt tell them why they are bound to it, and if you quote Scripture to prove it, you muſt give them leave to judge, whether the words alledged ſpeak your ſenſe or no, and therefore to diſſent if they ſay no ſuch thing. And although all men are not wiſe, and proceed diſcreetly, yet all make their choice ſome way or other. He that chooſes to pleaſe his fancy takes his choice as much, as he that chooſes prudently. And no man ſpeaks more unreaſonably, than he that denies to men the uſe of their Reaſon in choice of their Religion. For that I may by the way remove the common prejudice, Reaſon and Authority are not things incompetent or repugnant, eſpecially when the Authority is infallible and ſupreme; for there is no greater reaſon in the world than to believe ſuch an authority. But then we muſt conſider,

whether

whether every authority that pretends to be ſuch, is ſo indeed. And therefore *Deus dixit, ergo hoc verum eſt*, is the greateſt demonſtration in the world for things of this nature. But it is not ſo in humane Dictates, and yet reaſon and humane authority are not enemies. For it is a good argument for us to follow ſuch an opinion, becauſe it is made ſacred by the Authority of Councils and Eccleſiaſtical Tradition, and ſometimes it is the beſt reaſon we have in a queſtion, and then it is to be ſtrictly followed; but there may alſo be at other times a reaſon greater than it that ſpeaks againſt it, and then the Authority muſt not carry it. But then the difference is not between reaſon and authority, but between this reaſon and that, which is greater: For authority is a very good reaſon, and is to prevail, unleſs a ſtronger comes and diſarms it, but then it muſt give place. So that in this queſtion by [*Reaſon*] I do not mean a diſtinct Topick, but a transcendent that runs through all Topicks; for Reaſon, like Logick, is inſtrument of all things elſe, and when Revelation, and Philoſophy, and publick Experience, and all other grounds of probability or demonſtration have ſupplied us with matter, then Reaſon does but make uſe of them; that is, in plain terms, there being ſo many ways of arguing, ſo many ſects, ſuch differing intereſts, ſuch variety of Authority, ſo many pretences, and ſo many falſe beliefs, it concerns every wiſe Man to conſider which is the beſt argument, which propoſition relies upon the trueſt grounds: and if this were not his only way, why do Men diſpute and urge arguments, why do they cite Councils and Fathers, why do they alledge Scripture and Tradition, and all this on all ſides, and to contrary purpoſes? If we muſt judge, then we muſt uſe

our reason; if we muſt not judge, why do they produce evidence? Let them leave diſputing and decree propoſitions magiſterially, but then we may chooſe whether we will believe them or no; or if they ſay we muſt believe them, they muſt prove it, and tell us why. And all theſe diſputes concerning Tradition, Councils, Fathers, &c. are not arguments againſt or beſides reaſon, but conteſtations and pretences to the beſt arguments, and the moſt certain ſatisfaction of our reaſon. But then all theſe coming into queſtion, ſubmit themſelves to reaſon, that is, to be judged by humane underſtanding, upon the beſt grounds and information it can receive. So that Scripture, Tradition, Councils, and Fathers, are the evidence in a queſtion, but Reaſon is the Judge: That is, we being the perſons that are to be perſuaded, we muſt ſee that we be perſuaded reaſonably, and it is unreaſonable to aſſent to a leſſer evidence, when a greater and clearer is propounded, but of that every man for himſelf is to take cogniſance if he be able to judge, if he be not, he is not bound under the tie of neceſſity to know any thing of it; that, that is neceſſary ſhall be certainly conveyed to him, God that beſt can, will certainly take care for that; for if he does not, it becomes to be not neceſſary; or if it ſhould ſtill remain neceſſary, and he damned for not knowing it, and yet to know it be not in his power, then who can help it? there can be no further care in this buſineſs. In other things, there being no abſolute and prime neceſſity, we are left to our liberty to judge that way that makes beſt demonſtration of our piety and of our love to God and truth, not that way that is always the beſt argument of an excellent underſtanding, for this may be a bleſſing, but the other only is a duty.

And

And now that we are pitch'd upon that way *Numb. 6.* which is moſt natural and reaſonable in determination of our ſelves rather than of queſtions, which are often indeterminable, ſince right reaſon proceeding upon the beſt grounds it can, *viz.* of divine revelation and humane authority, and probability is our guide, (*Stando in humanis*) and ſuppoſing the aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit (which he never denies them that fail not of their duty in all ſuch things in which he requires truth and certainty) it remains that we conſider how it comes to paſs that men are ſo much deceived in the uſe of their reaſon, and choice of their Religion, and that in this account we diſtinguiſh thoſe accidents which make error innocent from thoſe which make it become a hereſy.

S E C T. XI.

Of ſome cauſes of Errour in the exerciſe of Reaſon which are inculcate in themſelves.

1. **T**Hen I conſider, that there are a great many inculpable cauſes of Errour, which are arguments of humane imperfections, not convictions of a ſin. And (1.) the variety of humane underſtandings is ſo great, that what is plain and apparent to one, is difficult and obſcure to another; one will obſerve a conſequent from a common principle, and another from thence will conclude the quite contrary. When *St. Peter* ſaw the viſion of the ſheet let down with all ſorts of beaſts in it, and a voice ſaying, *Surge Petre, macta & manduca*, if he had not by a particular *Numb. 1.*
aſſiſtance

assistance been directed to the meaning of the holy Ghost, possibly he might have had other apprehensions of the meaning of that vision, for to my self it seems naturally to speak nothing but the abolition of the Mosaical rites, and the restitution of us to that part of Christian liberty which consists in the promiscuous eating of meats; and yet besides this, there want not some understandings in the world, to whom these words seem to give Saint *Peter* a power to kill heretical Princes. Methinks it is a strange understanding that makes such extractions, but *Bozins* and *Baronius* did so. But men may understand what they please, especially when they are to expound Oracles. It was an argument of some wit, but of singularity of understanding, that hapned in the great contestation between the Missals of Saint *Ambrose* and Saint *Gregory*. The lot was thrown, and God made to be Judge, so as he was tempted to a miracle, to answer a question which themselves might have ended without much trouble. The two Missals were laid upon the Altar, and the Church door shut and sealed. By the morrow Mattins they found St. *Gregory's* Missal torn in pieces (saith the story) and throwne about the Church, but St. *Ambrose's* open'd and laid upon the Altar in a posture of being read. If I had been to judge of the meaning of this Miracle, I should have made no scruple to have said it had been the will of God that the Missal of St. *Ambrose* which had been anciently used, and publickly tryed and approved of, should still be read in the Church, and that of *Gregory* let alone, it being torn by an Angelical hand as an argument of its imperfection, or of the inconvenience of innovation. But yet they judg'd it otherwise, for by the tearing and scattering about,

they

they thought it was meant, it should be used over all the World, and that of St. *Ambrose* read only in the Church of *Millain*. I am more satisfied that the former was the true meaning, than I am of the truth of the story: But we must suppose that. And now there might have been eternal disputings about the meaning of the miracle, and nothing left to determine, when two fancies are the litigants, and the contestations about probabilities *hinc inde*. And I doubt not this was one cause of so great variety of opinions in the Primitive Church, when they proved their several opinions which were mysterious questions of Christian Theology, by testimonies out of the obscurer Prophets, out of the Psalms and Canticles, as who please to observe their Arguments of discourse and actions of Council shall perceive they very much used to do. Now although mens understandings be not equal, and that it is fit the best understandings should prevail, yet that will not satisfy the weaker understandings, because all men will not think that another understanding is better than his own, or at least not in such a particular, in which with fancy he hath pleased himself. But commonly they that are least able, are most bold, and the more ignorant is the more confident, therefore it is but necessary if he would have another bear with him, he also should bear with another, and if he will not be prescribed to, neither let him prescribe to others. And there is the more reason in this, because such modesty is commonly to be desired of the more imperfect; for wise Men know the ground of their persuasion, and have their confidence proportionable to their evidence, others have not, but over-act their trifles: and therefore I said it is but a reasonable demand, that they that have the least reason should

ſhould not be moſt imperious; and for others it being reaſonable enough, for all their great advantages upon other men, they will be ſoon perſuaded to it; for although wiſe men might be bolder, in reſpect of the perſons of others leſs diſcerning, yet they know there are but few things ſo certain as to create much boldneſs and confidence of aſſertion. If they do not, they are not the Men I take them for.

Numb. 2.

2. When an action or opinion is commenc'd with zeal and piety againſt a known vice or a vitious perſon, commonly all the miſtakes of it's proceeding are made ſacred by the holineſs of the principle, and ſo abuſes the perſuaſions of good People, that they make it as a Characteriſtick note to diſtinguiſh good perſons from bad; and then whatever error is conſecrated by this means, is therefore made the more laſting, becauſe it is accounted holy, and the perſons are not eaſily accounted hereticks, becauſe they erred upon a pious principle. There is a memorable inſtance in one of the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom, viz. concerning Images. For when *Philippicus* had eſpied the Images of the ſix firſt Synods upon the front of a Church, he cauſed them to be pulled down; Now he did it in hatred of the ſixth Synod: For he being a Monothelite, ſtood condemn'd by that Synod. The Catholicks that were zealous for the ſixth Synod, cauſed the Images and repreſentments to be put up again, and then ſprung the Queſtion concerning the lawfulness of Images in Churches; *Philippicus* and his party ſtrived by ſuppreſſing Images to do diſparagement to the ſixth Synod: the Catholicks to preſerve the honour of the ſixth Synod, would uphold Images. And then the queſtion came to be changed, and they who were eaſie enough to be

▼id. Paulum
Diaconum.

be persuaded to pull down Images, were over-
awed by a prejudice against the *Monothelites*,
and the *Monothelites* striv'd to maintain the ad-
vantage they had got by a just and pious pretence
against Images. The *Monothelites* would have se-
cur'd their error by the advantage and consocia-
tion of a truth, and the other would rather de-
fend a dubious and disputable error, than lose
and let go a certain truth. And thus the case
stood, and the Successors of both parts were led
invincibly. For when the heresy of the *Mono-
thelites* disbanded, (which it did in a while after)
yet the opinion of the Iconoclasts, and the que-
stion of Images grew stronger. Yet since the I-
conoclasts at the first were Hereticks, not for their
breaking Images, but for denying the two
Wills of Christ, his Divine and his Humane: that
they were called Iconoclasts was to distinguish
their opinion in the question concerning the Ima-
ges, but that then Iconoclasts so easily had the re-
putation of Hereticks, was because of the other
opinion which was conjunct in their persons;
which opinion men afterwards did not easily di-
stinguish in them, but took them for Hereticks in
gross, and whatsoever they held to be heretical.
And thus upon this prejudice grew great advan-
tages to the veneration of Images, and the per-
sons at first were much to be excused, because
they were misguided by that which might have
abused the best men. And if *Epiphanius* who was
as zealous against Images in Churches as *Philippi-
cus* or *Leo Isaurus*, had but begun a publick con-
testation, and engaged Emperours to have made
Decrees against them, Christendom would have
had other apprehensions of it, than they had when
the *Monothelites* began it. For few Men will en-
dure a truth from the mouth of the Devil, and if
the

In cap. 6. Jo-
han.

L. 26. c. 3.
cont. *Fauftum*
Man. L. 1. c.
uit. dalmagin.

De reliq. SS.
L. 2. c. 6. *Self.*
Nicolaus.

the perſon be ſuſpected, ſo are his ways too. And it is a great ſubtlety of the Devil ſo to temper truth and falſhood in the ſame perſon, that truth may loſe much of its reputation by its mixture with error, and the error may become more plauſible by reaſon of its conjunction with truth. And this we ſee by too much experience, for we ſee many truths are blaſted in their reputation, becauſe perſons whom we think we hate upon juſt grounds of Religion, have taught them. And it was plain enough in the caſe of *Maldonat*, that ſaid of an explication of a place of Scripture, that it was moſt agreeable to Antiquity, but becauſe *Calvin* had ſo expounded it, he therefore choſe a new one. This was malice. But when a prejudice works tacitely, undiſcernably, and irrefiſtibly of the perſon ſo wrought upon, the man is to be pityed not condemned, though poſſibly his opinion deſerves it highly. And therefore it hath been uſual to diſcredit doctrines by the perſonal defailances of them that preach them: or with the diſreputation of that ſect that maintains them in conjunction with other perverſe doctrines. *Fauſtus* the Manichee in *St. Auſtin*, glories much, that in their Religion God was worſhipped purely and without Images. *St. Auſtin* liked it well, for ſo it was in his too, but from hence *Sanders* concludes, that to pull down Images in Churches was the hereſie of the Manichees. The Jews endure no Images, therefore *Bellarmino* makes it to be a piece of Judaism to oppoſe them. He might as well have concluded againſt ſaying our Prayers, and Church Muſick, that it is Judaical, becauſe the Jews uſed it. And he would be loth to be ſerved ſo himſelf, for he that had a mind to uſe ſuch arguments, might with much better probability conclude againſt their Sacrament

ment
racul
Cath
the u
did t
is for
beca
the h
even
whic
who
liſhe
feſs
time
ſerv
ten
Diſ
3
han
pro
ers
tho
Go
op
Fo
Go
tic
lo
th
th
un
m
ni
th
re
m
d

ment of extreme unction, becauſe when the miraculous healing was ceaſed, then they were not Catholicks, but Hereticks that did transfer it to the uſe of dying perſons, (ſays *Irenæus*;) for ſo did the *Valentinians*: And indeed this argument is ſomething better than I thought for at firſt, becauſe it was in *Irenæus* time reckoned among the hereſies. But there are a ſort of men that are even with them, and hate ſome good things which the Church of *Rome* teaches, becauſe ſhe who teaches ſo many errors, hath been the publiſher, and is the practicer of thoſe things. I confeſs the thing is always unreaſonable, but ſometimes it is invincible and innocent; and then may ſerve to abate the fury of all ſuch decretory ſentences, as condemn all the World but their own Diſciples.

3. There are ſome opinions that have gone *Numb. 3.* hand in hand with a bleſſing, and a prosperous profeſſion; and the good ſucceſs of their defenders hath amused many good people, becauſe they thought they heard Gods voice where they ſaw Gods hand, and therefore have ruſhed upon ſuch opinions with great piety and as great miſtaking. For where they once had entertained a fear of God, and apprehenſion of his ſo ſenſible declaration, ſuch a fear produces ſcruple, and a ſcrupulous conſcience is always to be pityed, becauſe though it is ſeldom wiſe, it is always pious. And this very thing hath prevail'd ſo far upon the underſtandings even of wiſe men, that *Bellarmino* makes it a note of the true Church. Which opinion when it prevails is a ready way to make, that inſtead of Martyrs all men ſhould prove Hereticks or Apoſtates in perſecution; for ſince men in miſery are very ſuſpicious, out of ſtrong deſires to find out the cauſe, that by removing it

it they may be relieved, they apprehend that to be it that is firſt preſented to their fears; and then if ever truth be afflicted, ſhe ſhall alſo be deſtroyed. I will ſay nothing in defiance of this fancy, although all the experience in the world ſays it is falſe; and that of all men Chriſtians ſhould leaſt believe it to be true, to whom a perpetual croſs is their certain expectation, (and the argument is like the Moon, for which no garment can be fit, it alters according to the ſucceſs of humane affairs, and in one age will ſerve a Pa-piſt, and in another a Proteſtant) yet when ſuch an opinion does prevail upon timorous perſons, the malignity of their error (if any be conſequent to this fancy, and taken up upon the reputation of a proſperous hereſy) is not to be conſidered ſimply and nakedly, but abatement is to be made in a juſt proportion to that fear, and to that apprehenſion.

Numb. 4.

4. Education is ſo great and ſo invincible a prejudice, that he who maſters the inconvenience of it, is more to be commended than he can juſtly be blam'd that complies with it. For Men do not always call them principles which are the prime fountains of reaſon, from whence ſuch conſequents naturally flow, as are to guide the actions and diſcourſes of men; but they are principles which they are firſt taught, which they ſuck'd in next to their Milk, and by a proportion to thoſe firſt principles they uſually take their eſtimate of propoſitions. For whatſoever is taught to them at firſt they believe infinitely, for they know nothing to the contrary, they have had no other maſters, whoſe theorems might abate the ſtrength of their firſt perſuaſions, and it is a great advantage in thoſe caſes to get poſſeſſion; and before their firſt principles can be diſlodg'd,

they

they are made habitual and complexional, it is in their nature then to believe them, and this is helped forward very much by the advantage of love and veneration which we have to the first parents of our persuasions. And we see it in the orders of Regulars in the Church of *Rome*. That opinion which was the opinion of their Patron or Founder, or of some eminent Personage of the Institute, is enough to engage all the Order to be of that opinion; and it is strange that all the Dominicans should be of one opinion in the matter of Predetermination and immaculate conception, and all the Franciscans of the quite contrary, as if their understandings were form'd in a different mold, and furnished with various principles by their very rule. Now this prejudice works by many principles, but how strongly they do possess the understanding is visible in that great instance of the affection and perfect persuasion the weaker sort of people have to that which they call the Religion of their Fore-Fathers. You may as well charm a Fever asleep with the noise of Bells, as make any pretence of Reason against that Religion which old Men have entail'd upon their Heirs male so many generations till they can prescribe. And the Apostles found this to be most true in the extremest difficulty they met with, to contest against the rites of *Moses*, and the long superstition of the Gentiles, which they therefore thought fit to be retain'd, because they had done so formerly, *Pergentes non quo eundum est, sed quo itur*, and all the blessings of this life which God gave them, they had in conjunction with their Religion, and therefore they believed it was for their Religion, and this persuasion was bound fast in them with ribs of Iron; the Apostles were forc'd to unloose the whole

*Optima ratio
ea quæ magno
assensu, recep-
ta sunt quo-
rumq; exempla
multa sunt,
nec ad ratio-
nem, sed ad f-
militudinem
vivimus. Sen.
Vid. Minut.
Fel. octav.*

con-

conjuncture of parts and principles in their understandings, before they could make them malleable and receptive of any impressions. But the observation and experience of all wise men can justify this truth. All that I shall say to the present purpose, is this, that consideration is to be had to the weakness of persons when they are prevail'd upon by so innocent a prejudice, and when there cannot be arguments strong enough to over-master an habitual persuasion bred with a man, nourish'd up with him, that always eat at his table, and lay in his bosom, he is not easily to be called Heretick, for if he keeps the foundation of faith, other articles are not so clearly demonstrated on either side, but that a man may innocently be abused to the contrary. And therefore in this case to handle him charitably, is but to do him justice: And when an opinion *in minoribus articulis*, is entertain'd upon the title and stock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, since upon no better stock nor stronger arguments, most men entertain their whole Religion, even Christianity it self.

Numb. 5.

5. There are some persons of a differing persuasion, who therefore are the rather to be tolerated, because the indirect practices and impostures of their adversaries have confirmed them, that those opinions which they disavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of Gods appointment: For it is no unreasonable discourse to say, that God will not be served with a Lye, for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to support all those truths which he hath commanded, and hath supplyed every honest cause with enough for its maintainance, and to contest against its adversaries. And (but that they which use indirect arts will not be willing to

loſe any of their unjuſt advantages, nor yet be charitable to thoſe perſons, whom either to gain or to undoe, they leave nothing unattempted) the Church of *Rome* hath much reaſon not to be ſo decretory in her ſentences againſt perſons of a differing perſuaſion, for if their cauſe were entirely the cauſe of God, they have given wiſe people reaſon to ſuſpect it, becauſe ſome of them have gone to the Devil to defend it. And if it be remembred what tragedies were ſtirred up againſt *Luther*, for ſaying the Devil had taught him an argument againſt the Maſs, it will be of as great advantage againſt them, that they go to the Devil for many arguments to ſupport not only the Maſs, but the other diſtinguiſhing Articles of their Church: I inſtance in the notorious forging of Miracles, and framing of falſe and ridiculous Legends. For the former I need no other inſtances than what happened in the great conteſtation about the immaculate conception, when there were Miracles brought on both ſides to prove the contradictory parts; and though it be more than probable that both ſides play'd the jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to be diſcovered, and the actors burned at *Berne*. But this diſcovery happened by providence; for the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of probability than the Franciſcan; is clearly more conſonant both to Scripture and all Antiquity, and this part of it is acknowledged by the greateſt Patrons themſelves, as *Salmeron*, *Poſa* and *Wadding*, yet becauſe they played the Knaves in a juſt queſtion, and uſed falſe arts to maintain a true propoſition, God Almighty, to ſhew that he will not be ſerved by a lye, was pleaſed rather to diſcover the impoſture in the right opinion than in the falſe, ſince nothing is more diſhonourable to God,

R

than

conjuncture of parts and principles in their underſtandings, before they could make them malleable and receptive of any impreſſes. But the obſervation and experience of all wiſe men can juſtifie this truth. All that I ſhall ſay to the preſent purpoſe, is this, that conſideration is to be had to the weakneſs of perſons when they are prevail'd upon by ſo innocent a prejudice, and when there cannot be arguments ſtrong enough to over-maſter an habitual perſuaſion bred with a man, nourish'd up with him, that always eat at his table, and lay in his boſom, he is not eaſily to be called Heretick, for if he keeps the foundation of faith, other articles are not ſo clearly demonſtrated on either ſide, but that a man may innocently be abuſed to the contrary. And therefore in this caſe to handle him charitably, is but to do him juſtice: And when an opinion *in minoribus articulis*, is entertain'd upon the title and ſtock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, ſince upon no better ſtock nor ſtronger arguments, moſt men entertain their whole Religion, even Chriſtianity it ſelf.

Numb. 5.

5. There are ſome perſons of a differing perſuaſion, who therefore are the rather to be tolerated, becauſe the indirect practices and impoſtures of their adverſaries have confirmed them, that thoſe opinions which they diſavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of Gods appointment: For it is no unreaſonable diſcourſe to ſay, that God will not be ſerved with a Lye, for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to ſupport all thoſe truths which he hath commanded, and hath ſupplied every honeſt cauſe with enough for its maintainance, and to conteſt againſt its adverſaries. And (but that they which uſe indirect arts will not be willing to

loſe any of their unjuſt advantages, nor yet be charitable to thoſe perſons, whom either to gain or to undoe, they leave nothing unattempted) the Church of *Rome* hath much reaſon not to be ſo decretory in her ſentences againſt perſons of a differing perſuaſion, for if their cauſe were entirely the cauſe of God, they have given wiſe people reaſon to ſuſpect it, becauſe ſome of them have gone to the Devil to defend it. And if it be remembred what tragedies were ſtirred up againſt *Luther*, for ſaying the Devil had taught him an argument againſt the Maſs, it will be of as great advantage againſt them, that they go to the Devil for many arguments to ſupport not only the Maſs, but the other diſtinguiſhing Articles of their Church: I inſtance in the notorious forging of Miracles, and framing of falſe and ridiculous Legends. For the former I need no other inſtances than what happened in the great conteſtation about the immaculate conception, when there were Miracles brought on both ſides to prove the contradictory parts; and though it be more than probable that both ſides play'd the jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to be diſcovered, and the actors burned at *Berne*. But this diſcovery happened by providence; for the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of probability than the Franciſcan; is clearly more conſonant both to Scripture and all Antiquity, and this part of it is acknowledged by the greateſt Patrons themſelves, as *Salmeron*, *Poſa* and *Wadding*, yet becauſe they played the Knaves in a juſt queſtion, and uſed falſe arts to maintain a true propoſition, God Almighty, to ſhew that he will not be ſerved by a lye, was pleaſed rather to diſcover the impoſture in the right opinion than in the falſe, ſince nothing is more diſhonourable to God,

R

than

than to offer a ſin in ſacrifice to him, and nothing more incongruous in the nature of the thing, than that truth and falſhood ſhould ſupport each other, or that true doctrine ſhould live at the charges of a lye. And he that conſiders the arguments for each opinion will eaſily conclude, that if God would not have truth confirmed by a lye, much leſs would he himſelf atteſt a lye with a true miracle. And by this ground it will eaſily follow, that the Franciſcan party, although they had better luck than the Dominicans, yet had not more honeſty, becauſe their cauſe was worſe, and therefore their arguments no whit the better. And although the argument drawn from miracles is good to atteſt a holy doctrine, which by its own worth will ſupport it ſelf, after way is a little made by miracles. yet of it ſelf and by its own reputation it will not ſupport any fabrick; for inſtead of proving a doctrine to be true, it makes that the miracles themſelves are ſuſpected to be illuſions, if they be pretended in behalf of a doctrine, which we think we have reaſon to account falſe. And therefore the Jews did not believe Chriſts doctrine for his Miracles, but diſbelieve the truth of his Miracles, becauſe they did not like his doctrine. And if the holineſs of his doctrine, and the Spirit of God by inſpirations and infuſions, and by that which St. Peter calls *a ſurer word of prophecy*, had not atteſted the Divinity both of his Perſon and his Office, we ſhould have wanted many degrees of confidence which now we have upon the truth of Chriſtian Religion. But now ſince we are fore-told by this *ſurer word of prophecy*, that is, the prediction of Jeſus Chriſt, that Antichriſt ſhould come in all wonders, and ſigns, and lying miracles, and that the Church ſaw much of that already verified in

Vid. Baron.
A. D. 68. n.
22. Philo-
ſtrat. l. 4. T.
485. com-
pend. Ce-
ſaren. p. 202.

in *Simon Magnus*, *Apollonius Tyanæus*, and *Manetho*, and divers *Hereticks, it is now come to that pass, that the argument in its best advantage proves nothing so much as that the doctrine which it pretends to prove, is to be suspected, because it was foretold that false doctrine should be obtruded under such pretences. But then when not only true miracles are an insufficient argument to prove a truth since the establishment of Christianity, but that the miracles themselves are false and spurious, it makes that doctrine in whose defence they come, justly to be suspected, because they are a demonstration that the interested persons use all means, leave nothing unattempted to prove their propositions, but since they so fail as to bring nothing from God, but something from the Devil for its justification, it's a great sign that the doctrine is false, because we know the Devil, unless it be against his will, does nothing to prove a true proposition that makes against him. And now then those persons who will endure no man of another opinion, might do well to remember how by their exorcisms, their Devils tricks at *Londun*, and the other side pretending to cure mad folks and persons bewitched, and the many discoveries of their juggling, they have given so much reason to their adversaries to suspect their doctrine, that either they must not be ready to condemn their persons who are made suspicious by their indirect proceeding in attestation of that which they value so high as to call their Religion, or else they must condemn themselves for making the scandal active and effectual.

* Stapleton.
prompt. Moral. pars æst.
va, p. 627.

As for false Legends, it will be of the same *Numb. 4.* consideration, because they are false Testimonies of Miracles that were never done, which differs

only from the other as a lye in words from a lye in action, but of this we have witneſs enough in that decree of Pope *Leo* the X. Seſſion the eleventh, of the laſt *Lateran* Council, where he excommunicates all the forgers and inventors of viſions and falſe miracles, which is a teſtimony that it was then a practice ſo publick as to need a Law for its ſuppreſſion; and if any man ſhall doubt whether it were ſo or no, let him ſee the *Centum gravamina* of the Princes of *Germany* where it is highly complain'd of. But the extreme ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs of the inventors of lying ſtorieſ is ſo great, as to give occaſion to ſome

* τὰ γὰρ μὴ
εἰρημύνα
ἐν βλαζό-
μῳις, καὶ τὰ
ἀβιάτως
εἰρημύνα
ὑπομεινέ-
τε παρὰ
ἐκ δ' αὖ ἐστιν
Ibid. Peſuſ.

Vid. l. 11.
loc. Thcol.
cap. 6.

Canus ibid.

persons to ſuſpect the truth of all * Church ſtory, witneſs the Legend of *Lombardy*: of the Author of which the Biſhop of the *Canaries* gives this Teſtimony, *In illo enim libro miraculorum monstra ſapius quam vera miracula legas. Hanc homo ſcripſit ferrei oris, plumbei cordis, animi certe parum ſeveri & prudentis.* But I need not deſcend ſo low, for *St. Gregory* and *V. Bede* themſelves reported miracles, for the authority of which they only had the report of the common people, and it is not certain that *St. Hierom* had ſo much in his ſtorieſ of *St. Paul* and *St. Anthony*, and the *Fauns* and the *Satyrs* which appear'd to them, and deſired their Prayers. But I ſhall only by way of eminency, note what *Sir Thomas Moore* ſays in his Epistle to *Ruthal* the Kings Secretary, before the Dialogue of *Lucian* [*Philopſendes*] that therefore he undertook the tranſlation of that dialogue, to free the World from a ſuperſtition that crept in under the face and title of Religion. For ſuch lyes (ſays he) are tranſmitted to us with ſuch authority that a certain impoſtor had perſuaded *St. Auſtin*, that the very fable which *Lucian* ſcoffs, makes ſport withal in that

* Dia-

* Dialogue was a real ſtory, and acted in his own days. The Epiſtle is worth the reading to this purpoſe; but he ſays this abuſe grew to ſuch a height, that ſcarce any life of any Saint or Martyr is truly related, but is full of lyes and lying wonders, and ſome perſons thought they ſerved God if they did honour to God's Saints by inventing ſome prodigious ſtory, or miracle for their reputation. So that now it is no wonder if the moſt pious men are apt to believe, and the greateſt hiſtorians are eaſie enough to report ſuch ſtories, which ſerving to a good end, are alſo conſign'd by the report of perſons, otherwiſe pious and prudent enough. I will not inſtance in *Vincentius his ſpeculum*, *Turonenſis*, *Thomas Cantipratanus*, *John Herolt*, *Vite Patrum*, nor the revelations of *St. Bridget*, though confirm'd by two Popes, *Martin V.* and *Boniface IX.* even the beſt and moſt deliberate amongſt them, *Lippoman*, *Surius*, *Lipſius*, *Bzovius*, and *Baronius* are ſo full of fables that they cauſe great diſreputation to the other monuments and records of Antiquity, and yet do no advantage to the cauſe under which they ſerve and take pay. They do no good and much hurt; but yet accidentally they may procure this advantage to charity, ſince they do none to faith; that ſince they have ſo abuſed the credit of ſtory that our confidences want much of that ſupport we ſhould receive from her records of antiquity, yet the men that diſſent and are ſcandaliz'd by ſuch proceedings ſhould be excuſed if they ſhould chance to be afraid of truth that hath put on garments of impoſture: and ſince much violence is done to the truth and certainty of their judging, let none be done to their liberty of judging: ſince they cannot meet a right guide, let them have a charitable judge. And

*Viz. De duobus ſpurinis, altero decedente, altero in vitam redeunte poſt viginti dies; quam in aliis nominibus videt *Lucianus*. Vide etiam argumentum *Gilberti Cognati*, in *Amorat.* in hunc Dialog.

Vid. *Palæot. de ſacra ſindone*, part 1. Epiſt. ad Lector.

since it is one very great argument against *Simon Magus* and against *Mahomet* that we can prove their miracles to be impostures, it is much to be pitied if timorous and suspicious persons shall invincibly and honestly less apprehend a truth which they see conveyed by such a testimony which we all use as an argument to reprove the Mahumetan superstition.

Numb. 7.

6. Here also comes in all the weaknesses and trifling prejudices which operate not by their own strength, but by advantage taken from the weakness of some understandings. Some men by a Proverb or a common saying are determin'd to the belief of a proposition, for which they have no argument better than such a Proverbial sentence. And when divers of the common People in *Jerusalem* were ready to yield their understandings to the belief of the *Messias*, they were turn'd clearly from their apprehensions by that Proverb, *look and see, does any good thing come from Galilee?* And this, *when Christ comes, no man knows from whence he is;* but this Man was known of what Parents, of what City. And thus the weakness of their understanding was abused, and that made the argument too hard for them. And the whole Seventh Chapter of *St. John's Gospel* is a perpetual instance of the efficacy of such trifling prejudices, and the vanity and weakness of popular understandings. Some whole Ages have been abused by a definition, which being once received, as most commonly they are upon slight grounds, they are taken for certainties in any science respectively, and for principles, and upon their reputation men use to frame conclusions, which must be false or uncertain according as the definitions are. And he that hath observed any thing of the weaknesses of Men, and the

the ſucceſſions of groundleſs doctrines from age to age, and how ſeldom definitions which are put into ſyſtemes, or that derive from the Fathers, or approved among School-men are examined by perſons of the ſame intereſts, will bear me witneſs, how many and great inconveniences preſs hard upon the perſuaſions of men, who are abuſed and yet never conſider who hurt them. Others, and they very many, are led by authority or examples of Princes, and great perſonages, *Numquid credis ex Principibus?* Some by the reputation of one learned man are carried into any perſuaſion whatſoever. And in the middle and latter Ages of the Church, this was the more conſiderable, becauſe the infinite ignorance of the Clerks, and the men of the long robe gave them over to be led by thoſe few guides which were mark'd to them by an eminency, much more than their ordinary: which alſo did the more amuſe them, becauſe moſt commonly they were fit for nothing but to admire what they underſtood not; their learning then was in ſome ſkill in the Maſter of the Sentences, in *Aquinas* or *Scotus* whom they admir'd next to the moſt intelligent order of Angels; hence came opinions that made Sects and diviſion of names, Thomiſts, Scotiſts, Albertiſts, Nominals, Reals, and I know not what monſters of names; and whole families of the ſame opinion, the whole inſtitute of an Order being ingag'd to believe according to the opinion of ſome leading man of the ſame Order, as if ſuch an opinion were impoſed upon them *in virtute ſanctæ obedientiæ*. But this inconvenience is greater when the principle of the miſtake runs higher, when the opinion is deriv'd from a Primitive man and a Saint, for then it often happens that what at firſt was but a plain innocent

Joh. 7.

ſeduction comes to be made ſacred by the veneration which is conſequent to the perſon for having lived long ago; and then, becauſe the perſon is alſo ſince canoniz'd, the error is almoſt made eternal, and the cure deſperate. Theſe and the like prejudices which are as various as the miſeries of humanity or the variety of humane underſtandings are not abſolute excuſes, unleſs to ſome perſons, but truly if they be to any, they are exemptions to all, from being preſſed with too peremptory a ſentence againſt them, eſpecially if we conſider what leave is given to all men by the Church of *Rome* to follow any one probable Doctör in an opinion which is conteſted againſt by many more. And as for the Doctörs of the other ſide, they being deſtitute of any pretences to an infallible *medium* to determine queſtions, muſt of neceſſity allow the ſame liberty to the people, to be as prudent as they can in the choice of a fallible guide; and when they have choſen, if they do follow him into error, the matter is not ſo inexpiable for being deceiv'd in uſing the beſt guides we had, which guides becauſe themſelves were abuſed, did alſo againſt their wills deceive me. So that this prejudice may the eaſier abuſe us, becauſe it is almoſt like a duty to follow the dictates of a probable Doctör, or if it be over-acted or accidentally paſs into an inconvenience, it is therefore to be excuſed becauſe the principle was not ill, unleſs we judge by our event, not by the antecedent probability. Of ſuch men as theſe it was ſaid by St. *Auſtin*, *Cate-*

ram turbam non intelligendi vivacitas, ſed credendi ſimplicitas tutiſſimam facit. And *Gregory Nazianzen*, οὕτως πολλὰν τὸν λαὸν τὸ ἁβασάνισον. The common ſort of people are ſafe in their not inquiring by their own induſtry, and in the ſimpli-

Contr. Fund.
cap. 4.

Orat. 21.

city

city of their underſtanding relying upon the beſt guides they can get.

But this is of ſuch a nature in which as we may *Numb. 6.* inculpably be deceived, ſo we may turn it into a vice or a deſign, and then the conſequent errors will alter the property, and become hereſies. There are ſome men that have mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage, and ſome that have itching Ears, and heap up teachers to themſelves. In theſe and the like caſes the authority of a perſon, and the prejudices of a great reputation is not the excuſe but the fault: And a Sin is ſo far from excuſing an Error, that Error becomes a ſin by reaſon of it's relation to that Sin as to it's parent and principle.

S E C T. XII.

Of the innocency of Error in opinion in a pious Perſon.

AND therefore as there are ſo many inno- *Numb. 1.* cent cauſes of Error, as there are weakneſſes within and harmleſs and unavoidable prejudices from without, ſo if ever error be procured by a vice it hath no excuſe, but becomes ſuch a crime, of ſo much malignity, as to have influence upon the effect and conſequent, and by communication makes it become criminal. The Apoſtles noted two ſuch cauſes: *Covetouſneſs* and *Ambition*, the former in them of the Circumciſion, and the latter in *Diotrephes* and *Simon Magus*; and there were ſome that were ἀρόμενοι ἐπθυ- *2 Tim. 3.* *ῥάως ποικίλαις*, they were of the long robe too, but they

they were the ſhe-Diſciples, upon whoſe Conſciences ſome falſe Apoſtles had influence by advantage of their wantonneſs, and thus the three principles of all ſin become alſo the principles of hereſie, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. And in purſuance of theſe arts the Devil hath not wanted fuel to ſet a work incendaries in all Ages of the Church. The Biſhops were always honourable, and moſt commonly had great revenues, and a Biſhoprick would ſatiſfie the two deſigns of Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and this hath been the golden Apple very often contended for, and very often the cauſe of great fires in the Church. *Thebulis quia rejeſtus ab Episcopatu Hieroſolymitano, turbare cœpit Eccleſiam*, ſaid *Egeſippus* in *Eusebius*. *Tertullian* turn'd Montaniſt in diſcontent for miſſing the Biſhoprick of *Carthage* after *Agrippinus*, and ſo did *Montanus* himſelf for the ſame diſcontent, ſaith *Nicephorus*. *Novatus* would have been Biſhop of *Rome*, *Donatus* of *Carthage*, *Arrius* of *Alexandria*, *Aerius* of *Sebaſtia*, but they all miſſed, and therefore all of them vexed Chriſtendom. And this was ſo common a thing, that oftentimes, the threatning the Church with a ſchiſm, or a hereſie, was a deſign to get a Biſhoprick; And *Socrates* reports of *Asterius*, that he did frequent the Conventicles of the *Arrians*; *Nam Episcopatum aliquem ambiebat*. And ſetting aſide the infirmities of men, and their innocent prejudices; *Epiphanius* makes pride to be the only cauſe of hereſies, ὕβρις καὶ πρέζυς, Pride and Prejudice cauſe them all, the one criminally, the other innocently. And indeed *St. Paul* does almoſt make Pride the only cauſe of hereſies, his words cannot be expounded, unleſs it be at leaſt the principal, καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ πρὸς διδασκαλίᾳ, and conſents not to ſound words,

and

and the doctrine that is according to godlineſs,
 πεινῶναι μηδὲν ἐπαίμενος, ἀλλὰ νοσῶν περὶ ζήσεως καὶ λο-
 γμαχίας, ἐξ ὧν γινέται φόβος, εἰς, βλασφημία, ὑπόνοια
 πονηραί.

The ſum is this, If ever an opinion be begun *Numb. 2.*
 with pride, or manag'd with impiety, or ends in
 a crime; the man turns Heretick: but let the er-
 ror be never ſo great, ſo it be not againſt an Ar-
 ticle of Creed, if it be ſimple and hath no confe-
 deration with the perſonal iniquity of the man,
 the opinion is as innocent as the perſon, though
 perhaps as falſe as he is ignorant, and therefore
 ſhall burn though he himſelf eſcape. But in theſe
 caſes and many more, (for the cauſes of decep-
 tion increaſe by all accidents, and weakneſſes,
 and illuſions) no man can give certain judgment
 upon the perſons of men in particular, unleſs the
 matter of fact and crime be accident and noto-
 rious. The man cannot by humane judgement
 be concluded a Heretick, unleſs his opinion be
 an open reſeſſion from plain demonſtrative di-
 vine authority (which muſt needs be notorious,
 voluntary, vincible and criminal) or that there
 be a palpable ſerving of an end accidental and
 extrinſecal to the opinion.

But this latter is very hard to be diſcerned, *Numb. 3.*
 becauſe thoſe accidental and adherent crimes
 which makes the man a Heretick, in queſtions
 not ſimply fundamental or of neceſſary practice,
 are actions ſo internal and ſpiritual, that cogni-
 zance can but ſeldom be taken of them. And
 therefore (to inſtance) though the opinion of Pur-
 gatory be falſe, yet to believe it cannot be hereſie,
 if a Man be abuſed into the belief of it invincibly,
 becauſe it is not a Doctrine either fundamentally
 falſe or practically impious, it neither proceeds
 from the will, nor hath any immediate or di-
 rect

rect influence upon choice and manners. And as for thoſe other ends of upholding that opinion which poſſibly its Patrons may have, as for the reputation of their Churches infallibility, for the advantage of Derges, Requiemſ, Maſſes, Monthly minds, Anniverſaries, and other offices for the dead, which uſually are very profitable, rich and eaſie, theſe things may poſſibly have ſole influences upon their underſtanding, but whether they have or no God only knows. If the propoſition and article were true, theſe ends might juſtly be ſubordinate and conſiſtent with a true propoſition. And there are ſome truths that are alſo profitable, as the neceſſity of maintenance to the Clergy, the Doctrines of reſtitution, giving Alms, lending freely, remitting debts in caſes of great neceſſity: And it would be but an ill argument that the preachers of theſe doctrines ſpeak falſe, becauſe poſſibly in theſe articles they may ſerve their own ends. For although *Demetrius* and the Crafts-men were without excuſe for reſiſting the Preaching of *St. Paul*, becauſe it was notorious they reſiſted the truth upon ground of profit and perſonal emoluments, and the matter was confeſſed by themſelves, yet if the Clergy ſhould maintain their juſt Rites and Revenues which by pious dedications and donations were long ſince aſcertained upon them, is it to be preſumed in order of Law and Charity, that this end is in the Men ſubordinate to truth, becauſe it is ſo in the thing it ſelf, and that therefore no judgment in prejudice of theſe truths can be made from that obſervation?

Numb. 4. But if *aliunde* we are aſcertain'd of the truth or falſhood of a propoſition reſpectively, yet the judgment of the perſonal ends of the men, cannot ordinarily be certain and judicial, becauſe moſt

com-

commonly the acts are private, and the purposes internal, and temporal ends may sometimes consist with truth, and whether the purposes of the men make these ends principal or subordinate, no Man can judge; and be they how they will, yet they do not always prove that when they are conjunct with error, that the error was caused by these purposes and criminal intentions.

But in questions practical, the doctrine it self *Numb. 31.* and the person too, may with more ease be re-proved, because matter of fact being evident, and nothing being so certain as the experiments of humane affairs, and these being the immediate consequents of such doctrines, are with some more certainty of observation redargued, than the speculative; whose judgment is of it self more difficult, more remote from matter and humane observation, and with less curiosity and explicitness declared in Scripture as being of less consequence and concernment in order to Gods and Man's great end. In other things which end in notion and ineffective contemplation, where neither the doctrine is malicious nor the person apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God, and as there is no certainty of humane judicature in this case, so it is to no purpose it should be judged. For if the person may be innocent with his Error, and there is no rule whereby he can certainly be pronounced, that he is actually criminal; (as it happens in matters speculative.) Since the end of the Commandment is love out of a *pure conscience, and faith unfained*; and the Commandment may obtain its end in a consistence with this simple speculative Error, Why should Men trouble themselves with such opinions, so as to disturb the publick charity
or

or the private confidence? Opinions and perſons are juſt ſo to be judged as other matters and perſons criminal. For no man can judge any thing elſe: it muſt be a crime, and it muſt be open, ſo as to take cognizance, and make true humane judgment of it. And this is all I am to ſay concerning the cauſes of hereſies, and of the diſtinguiſhing rules for guiding of our judgments towards others.

Numb. 6.

As for guiding our judgments and the uſe of our reaſon in judging for our ſelves, all that is to be ſaid is reducible to this one propoſition. Since errors are then made ſins when they are contrary to charity or inconſiſtent with a good life and the honour of God, that judgment is the trueſt, or at leaſt that opinion moſt innocent that 1. beſt promotes the reputation of Gods Glory, and 2. is the beſt inſtrument of holy life. For in queſtions and interpretations of diſpute, theſe two analogies are the beſt to make propoſitions, and conjectures and determinations. Diligence and care in obtaining the beſt guides, and the moſt convenient aſſiſtances, prayer, and modeſty of Spirit ſimplicity of purpoſes and intentions, humility and aptneſs to learn, and a peaceable diſpoſition, are therefore neceſſary to finding out truths, becauſe they are parts of good life, without which our truths will do us but little advantage, and our errors can have no excuſe, but with theſe diſpoſitions as he is ſure to find out all that is neceſſary, ſo what truth he inculpably miſſes of, he is ſure is therefore not neceſſary, becauſe he could not find it when he did his beſt and his moſt innocent endeavours. And this I ſay to ſecure the perſons; becauſe no rule can antecedently ſecure the propoſition in matters diſputable. For even in the proportions and explications of this rule there is infinite variety of diſputes.

And

And when the diſpute concerning free will, one party denies it, becauſe he believes it magnifies the grace of God, that it works irrefiſtibly; the other affirms, becauſe he believes it engages us upon greater care and piety of our endeavours. The one opinion thinks God reaps the glory of our good actions, the other thinks it charges our bad actions upon him. So in the queſtion of merit, one part chooſes his aſſertion becauſe he thinks it incourages us to do good works, the other believes it makes us proud, and therefore he rejects it. The firſt believes it increaſes piety, the ſecond believes it increaſes ſpiritual preſumption and vanity. The firſt thinks it magnifies God's juſtice, the other thinks it derogates from his mercy. Now then, ſince neither this nor any ground can ſecure a man from poſſibility of miſtaking, we were infinitely miſerable if it would not ſecure us from puniſhment, ſo long as we willingly conſent not to a crime, and do our beſt endeavour to avoid an error. Only by the way, let me obſerve, that ſince there are ſuch great differences of apprehenſion concerning the conſequents of an article, no man is to be charged with the odious conſequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine is, but the perſon is not, if he underſtands not ſuch things to be conſequent to his Doctrine; for if he did, and then avows them, they are his direct opinions, and he ſtands as chargeable with them as with his firſt propoſitions; but if he diſ-avows them, he would certainly rather quit his own opinion than avow ſuch errors or impieties, which are pretended to be conſequent to it, becauſe every man knows that can be no truth, from whence falſhood naturally and immediately does derive, and he therefore believes his firſt propoſitions
becauſe

because he believes it innocent of ſuch errors as are charg'd upon it directly or conſequently.

Numb. 7.

So that now, ſince no error neither for it ſelf nor its conſequents is to be charg'd as criminal upon a pious perſon, ſince no ſimple error is a ſin, nor does condemn us before the throne of God, ſince he is ſo pitiful to our crimes, that he pardons many *de toto & integro*, in all makes abatement for the violence of temptation, and the ſurprizal and invaſion of our faculties, and therefore much leſs will demand of us an account for our weakneſſes; and ſince the ſtrongeſt underſtanding cannot pretend to ſuch an immunity and exemption from the condition of men, as not to be deceived and confeſs its weakneſs; it remains we inquire what deportment is to be uſed towards perſons of a differing perſuaſion, when we are (I do not ſay doubtful of a propoſition, but) convinc'd that he that differs from us is in Error, for this was the firſt intention, and the laſt end of this diſcourſe.

S E C T. XIII.

Of the deportment to be uſed towards perſons diſagreeing, and the reaſons why they are not to be puniſhed with Death, &c.

Numb. 1.

FOR although every man may be deceived, yet ſome are right and may know it too, for every man that may err, does not therefore certainly err, and if he errs becauſe he recedes from his rule, then if he follows it he may do right, and if ever any man upon juſt grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right and was ſure of

of it too, and although confidence is miſtaken for a juſt perſuaſion many times, yet ſome men are confident, and have reaſon ſo to be. Now when this happens, the queſtion is what deportment they are to uſe towards perſons that diſagree from them, and by conſequence are in error.

1. Then no Chriſtian is to be put to death, *Numb. 2.* diſmembred, or otherwiſe directly perſecuted for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or blaſphemy. If it plainly and apparently brings in a crime, and himſelf does act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is puniſhable according to its proportion or malignity; as if he preaches treaſon or ſedition, his opinion is not his excuſe, becauſe it brings in a crime, and a man is never the leſs traitor, becauſe he believes it lawful to commit treaſon; and a man is a murderer if he kills his brother unjuſtly, although he thinks he does God good ſervice in it. Matters of fact are equally judicable whether the principle of them be from within or from without: And if a man could pretend to innocence in being ſeditious, blaſphemous, or perjur'd by perſuading himſelf it is lawful, there were as great a gate opened to all iniquity, as will entertain all the pretences, the deſigns, the impoſtures, and diſguiſes of the world. And therefore God hath taken order that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life ſhall be ſo clearly explicated, that without the crime of the man, he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty. And therefore the Apoſtles and primitive Doctors made no ſcruple of condemning ſuch perſons for Hereticks that did dogmatize a ſin. He that teacheth others to ſin, is worſe than he that commits the crime, whether he be tempted by his own intereſt, or encouraged by the others

S doctrine.

doctrines. It was as bad in *Basilides* to teach it to be lawful to renounce Faith and Religion, and take all manner of Oaths and Covenants in time of perſecution, as if himſelf had done ſo; nay it is as much worſe, as the miſchief is more univerſal, or as a fountain is greater than a drop of water taken from it. He that writes Treason in a Book, or preaches Sedition in a Pulpit, and perſuades it to the people, is the greateſt Traitor and incendiary, and his opinion there is the fountain of a ſin, and therefore could not be entertain'd in his underſtanding upon weakneſs, or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot from Scripture or divine revelation have any pretence to colour that ſo fairly as to ſeduce either a wiſe or an honeſt man. If it reſt there and goes no further, it is not cognofcible, and ſo ſcapes that way; but if it be publiſhed and comes *à ſtylo ad Machæram* (as *Tertullian's* phraſe is) then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in perſuaſion, and is juſt ſo puniſhable, as is the crime that it perſuades: ſuch were they of whom *St. Paul* complains, who brought in damnable doctrines and luſts. *St. Paul's Utinam abſcindantur* is juſt of them, take it in any ſenſe of rigour and ſeverity, ſo it be proportionable to the crime, or criminal doctrine. Such were thoſe of whom God ſpoke in *Deut. 13*. If any Prophet tempts to idolatry, ſaying, Let us go after other Gods, he ſhall be ſlain. But theſe do not come into this queſtion. But the propoſition is to be underſtood concerning queſtions diſputable in *materia intellectuali*, which alſo for all that law of killing, ſuch falſe Prophets were permitted with impunity in the Synagogue, as appears beyond exception in the great diviſions and diſputes between the Pharifees and the Sadduces. I deny

Gal. 5.

not

not but certain and known idolatry or any other ſort of practical impiety with its principiant doctrine may be puniſhed corporally, becauſe it is no other but matter of fact, but no matter of meer opinion, no errors that of themſelves are not ſins are to be perſecuted or puniſhed by death or corporal inflictions. This is now to be proved.

2. All the former diſcourſe is ſufficient argu- *Numb. 3.*
ment how eaſie it is for us in ſuch matters to be deceived. So long as Chriſtian Religion was a ſimple profeſſion of the articles of belief, and a hearty proſecution of the rules of good life, the fewneſs of the articles and the clearneſs of the rule, was cauſe of the ſeldom prevarication. But when divinity is ſwell'd up to ſo great a body, when the ſeveral queſtions which the peeviſhneſs and wantonneſs of ſixteen ages have commenc'd, are concentr'd into one, and from all theſe queſtions ſomething is drawn into the body of *Theology* till it hath aſcended up to the greatneſs of a mountain, and the ſum of Divinity collected by *Aquinas*, makes a volume as great as was that of *Livy* mock'd at in the *Epigram*,

Quem mea vix totum bibliotheca capit.

It is impoſſible for any induſtry to conſider ſo many particulars in the infinite numbers of queſtions as are neceſſary to be conſider'd before we can with certainty determine any. And after all the conſiderations which we can have in a whole age; we are not ſure *not to be deceived*. The obſcurity of ſome queſtions, the nicety of ſome articles, the intricacy of ſome revelations, the variety of humane underſtandings, the windings of *Logick*, the tricks of adverſaries,

the ſubtilty of Sophiſters, the engagement of educations, perſonal affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinity of authorities, the vaſtneſs of ſome arguments, as conſiſting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the ſeveral degrees of probability, the difficulties of Scripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the oppoſition of all exteriour arguments to each other, and their open conteſtation, the publick violence done to authors and records, the private arts and ſupplantiſings, the falſifyings, the indefatigable induſtry of ſome men to abuſe all underſtandings, and all perſuaſions into their own opinions, theſe and thouſands more, even all the difficulty of things, and all the weakneſſes of man and all the arts of the Devil, have made it impoſſible for any man in ſo great variety of matter not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the Pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular.

Numb. 4.

3. From hence proceeds a danger which is conſequent to this proceeding, for if we, who are ſo apt to be deceived, and ſo inſecure in our reſolution of queſtions diſputable, ſhould perſecute a diſagreeing perſon, we are not ſure we do not fight againſt God, for if his propoſition be true and perſecuted, then, becauſe all truth derives from God, this proceeding is againſt God, and therefore this is not to be done upon *Gammaliel's* ground, leſt peradventure we be found to fight againſt God, of which becauſe we can have no ſecurity (at leaſt) in this caſe, we have all the guilt of a doubtfull or an uncertain Conſcience. For if there be no ſecurity in the thing as I have largely proved, the Conſcience in ſuch caſes is as uncertain as the queſtion is, and if it be not doubtfull

doubtful where it is uncertain, it is becauſe the man is not wiſe, but as confident as ignorant, the firſt without reaſon, and the ſecond without excuſe. And it is very diſproportionable for a man to perſecute another certainly, for a propoſition, that if he were wiſe, he would know is not certain, at leaſt, the other perſon may innocently be uncertain of it. If he be kill'd, he is certainly kill'd, but if he be call'd Heretick, it is not ſo certain that he is an Heretick. It were good therefore, that proceedings were according to evidence, and the rivers not ſwell over the banks, nor a certain definitive ſentence of death paſſ'd upon ſuch perſuaſions which cannot certainly be defin'd. And this argument is of ſo much the more force, becauſe we ſee that the greateſt perſecutions that ever have been, were againſt truth, even againſt Chriſtianity it ſelf, and it was a prediction of our bleſſed Saviour, that perſecution ſhould be the lot of true believers: and if we compute the experience of ſuffering Chriſtendom, and the prediction, that truth ſhould ſuffer, with thoſe few inſtances of ſuffering Hereticks, it is odds, but perſecution is on the wrong ſide, and that it is error and hereſie, that is cruel and tyrannical, eſpecially ſince the truth of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Religion are ſo meek, ſo charitable, and ſo merciful: and we may in this caſe, exactly uſe the words of St. Paul, *But as then, he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit; even ſo it is now:* and ſo it ever will be till Chriſts ſecond coming.

4. Whoever perſecutes a diſagreeing perſon, arms all the world againſt himſelf, and all pious people of his own perſuaſion, when the ſcales of authority return to his adverſary, and attelt

Numb. 5.

Quo compertis
illu iniquitatem
perniciem li-
centiam endu-

*ita graſſabun-
tur. St. Aug.
epiſt. ad Do-
nat. Proconf.
& Contr. ep.
Fund. ita nunc
debeo ſuſtinere
& tanta pati-
entia vobis-
cum agere
quanta me-
cum egerunt
proximi mei
cum in veſtro
dogmate rabi-
oſus ac cæcus
errarem.*

his contradictory; and then what can he urge for mercy for himſelf, or his party that ſheweth none to others? If he ſays, that he is to be ſpared becauſe he believes true, but the other was juſtly perſecuted becauſe he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is as confidently believed to be a Heretick, as he believes his adverſary ſuch, and whether he be or no, being the thing in queſtion, of this he is not to be his own judge, but he that hath authority on his ſide, will be ſure to judge againſt him. So that what either ſide can indifferently make uſe of, it is good that neither would, becauſe neither ſide can with reaſon ſufficient do it in prejudice of the other. If a man will ſay, that every man muſt take his adventure, and if it happens authority to be with him, he will perſecute his adverſaries, and if it turns againſt him he will bear it as well as he can and hope for a reward of Martyrdom, and innocent ſuffering; beſides that this is ſo equal to be ſaid of all ſides, and beſides, that this is a way to make an eternal diſunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Chriſtendom nothing but a ſhambles, and a perpetual butchery, and as faſt as mens wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abuſed, ſo often there will be new executions and maſſacres. Beſides all this, it is moſt unreaſonable and unjuſt, as being contrariant to thoſe Laws of Juſtice and Charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeal to ſpare and preſerve an innocent, than to condemn a guilty perſon, and there is leſs malice and iniquity in ſparing the guilty, than in condemning the good. Becauſe it is in the power of men to remit a guilty perſon to divine judicature, and for divers cauſes, not to uſe ſeverity, but in no caſe is it lawful, neither hath God at

all

all given to man a power to condemn ſuch perſons as cannot be proved other than pious and innocent. And therefore it is better, if it ſhould ſo happen, that we ſhould ſpare the innocent perſon, and one that is actually deceiv'd, than that upon the turn of the wheel, the true believers ſhould be deſtroyed.

And this very reaſon, he that had authority *Numb. 6.* ſufficient, and abſolute to make Laws, was pleaſed to urge as a reaſonable inducement for the eſtabliſhing of that Law which he made for the indemnity of erring perſons. It was in the parable of the tares mingled with the good feed in *Agro dominico* the good feed (Chriſt himſelf being the interpreter) are the Children of the Kingdom, the tares are the Children of the wicked one, upon this comes the precept, *gather not the tares by themſelves, but let them both grow together till the harveſt*, that is, till the day of Judgment. This Parable hath been tortur'd infinitely to make it confeſs its meaning, but we ſhall ſoon diſpatch it. All the difficulty and variety of expoſition is reducible to theſe two queſtions, What is meant by [*Gather not,*] and what by [*Tares.*] That is, what kind of ſword is forbidden, and what kind of perſons are to be tolerated. The former is clear? for the ſpiritual ſword is not forbidden to be uſed to any ſort of criminals, for that would deſtroy the power of excommunication. The prohibition therefore lyes againſt the uſe of the temporal ſword in cutting off ſome perſons. Who they are, is the next difficulty. But by *tares*, or the *children of the wicked one*, are meant either perſons of ill lives, wicked perſons only *in re practica*, or elſe another kind of evil perſons, men criminal or faulty *in re intellectuali*. One or

other of theſe two muſt be meant; a third I know not. But the former cannot be meant, becauſe it would deſtroy all bodies politique, which cannot conſiſt without laws, nor laws without a compulſory and a power of the ſword, therefore if criminals were to be let alone till the day of Judgment, bodies politique muſt ſtand or fall *ad arbitrium impiorum*, and nothing good could be protected, not Innocence it ſelf, nothing could be ſecure but violence and tyranny. It follows then that ſince a kind of perſons which are indeed faulty are to be tolerated, it muſt be meant of perſons faulty in another kind, in which the Goſpel had not in other places clearly eſta bliſhed a power externally compulſory, and therefore ſince in all actions practically criminal a power of the ſword is permitted, here where it is denied muſt mean a crime of another kind, and by conſequence errors intellectual, commonly call'd Heresy.

Numb. 7.

* vide St. Chryſoſt. homil. 47. in Cap. 13. Matth. & St. Auguſt. Quæſt. in cap. 13. Mat. S. Cyprian. Ep. lib. 8. Ep. 1. Theophyl. L. in 13. Matth.

† S. Hieron. in cap. 13. Mat. ait, *per hanc parabolam ſignificari, ne in rebus dubiis præcepſ fiat judicium.*

And after all this the reaſon there given confirms this * interpretation, for therefore it is forbidden to cut off theſe tares, leſt we alſo pull up the wheat with them, which is the ſum of theſe two laſt arguments. For becauſe Heresy is of ſo nice conſideration, and difficult ſentence, in thinking to root up heresies, we may by our ¶ miſtakes deſtroy true doctrine, which although it be poſſible to be done in all caſes of practical queſtion, by miſtake, yet becauſe external actions are more diſcernable than inward ſpeculations and opinions, innocent perſons are not ſo eaſily miſtaken for the guilty, in actions criminal, as in matters of inward perſuaſion. And upon that very reaſon Saint Martin was zealous to have procured a revocation of a Commiſſion granted to ſeveral Tribunes to make enquiry in

in Spain for sects and opinions; for under colour of rooting out the Priscilianists, there was much mischief done, and more likely to happen to the Orthodox. For it happened then, as oftentimes since, *Palliore potius & veste quam fide hereticus dijudicari solebat aliquando per Tribunos Maximi*. They were no good inquisitors of heretical pravity, so *Sulpitius* witnesses. But secondly, the reason says, that therefore these persons are so to be permitted as not to be persecuted, lest when a revolution of humane affairs sets contrary opinions in the throne or chair, they who were persecuted before, should now themselves become persecutors of others, and so at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be persecuted. But as these reasons confirm the Law, and this sense of it, so abstracting from the Law, it is of it self concluding by an argument *ab incommodo*, and that founded upon the principles of justice, and right reason, as I formerly alledged.

4. We are not only uncertain of finding out truths in matters disputable, but we are certain that the best and ablest * Doctors of Christendom have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment, which thing is evident in all those instances of persons from whose doctrines all sorts of Christians respectively take liberty to dissent. The errors of *Papias*, *Irenaeus*, *Lactantius*, *Justin Martyr* in the Millennium opinion, of Saint *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the Asian and African Fathers in the question of Rebaptization, Saint *Austin* in his decretory and

• Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur, & quam difficile caveantur errores. Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt quam rarum & arduum sit carnalia phantasmata perire. Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt quibus & suspiriis & gemitibus fiat ut ex quantulaeunque parte possit intelligi Deus. Postremo illi in vos saviant qui nullo tali errore decepti sunt, quali vos deceptos vident. St.

uncha-

uncharitable sentence against the unbaptized children of Christian parents, the Roman or the Greek Doctors in the question of the procession of the holy Ghost, and in the matter of images, are examples beyond exception. Ἀμφὶ δ' ἀνδρῶν φρέσιν Ἀμπλακίαι ἀναείδμητοι κρέμανται. Now if these great personages had been persecuted or destroyed for their opinions, who should have answered the invaluable loss the Church of God should have sustained in missing so excellent, so exemplary, and so great lights? But then if these persons erred, and by consequence, might have been destroyed, what should have become of others whose understanding was lower, and their security less, their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate all men should have passed through the fire, for who can escape when Saint *Cyprian* and St *Austin* cannot? Now to say these persons were not to be persecuted because although they had errors, yet none condemned by the Church, at that time or before, is to say nothing to the purpose, nor nothing that is true. Not true, because Saint *Cyprian's* error was condemned by Pope *Stephen*, which in the present sense of the prevailing party in the Church of *Rome*, is to be condemned by the Church. Not to the purpose; because it is nothing else but to say that the Church did tolerate their errors. For since those opinions were open and manifest to the world, that the Church did not condemn them, it was either because those opinions were by the Church not thought to be errors, or if they were, yet she thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring person. And if she would do so still, it would in most cases be better than now it is. And yet if the Church had condemned them, it had not altered

altered the caſe as to this queſtion, for either the perſons upon the condemnation of their error ſhould have been perſecuted or not. If not, why ſhall they now, againſt the inſtance and precedent of thoſe ages who were confeſſedly wiſe and pious, and whoſe practices are often made to us arguments to follow? If yea, and that they had been perſecuted, it is the thing which this argument condemns, and the loſs of the Church had been invaluable in the loſing or the provocation and temptation of ſuch rare perſonages: and the example and the rule of ſo ill conſequence, that all perſons might upon the ſame ground have ſuffered, and though ſome had eſcaped, yet no man could have any more ſecurity from puniſhment than from error.

5. Either the diſagreeing perſon is in error, *Numb. 9.* or not, but a true believer; in either of the caſes to perſecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true believer, then it is a clear caſe that we do open violence to God, and his ſervants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and ſtupidity than to give to error the glory of Martyrdom, and the advantages which are accidentally conſequent to a perſecution? For as it was true of the Martyrs *Quoties morimur toties naſcimur*, and the increaſe of their trouble was the increaſe of their confidence and the eſtabliſhment of their perſuaſions: ſo it is in all falſe opinions; for that an opinion is true or falſe is extrinſecal or accidental to the conſequents and advantages it gets by being afflicted. And there is a popular pity that follows all perſons in miſery, and that compaſſion breeds like- neſs of affections, and that very often produces like- neſs of perſuaſion; and ſo much the rather, becauſe

because there ariſes a jealousie and pregnant ſuſpicion that they who perſecute an opinion are deſtitute of ſufficient arguments to confute it, and that the hangman is the beſt diſputant. For if thoſe arguments which they have for their own doctrine were a ſufficient ground of confidence and perſuaſion, men would be more willing to uſe thoſe mean arguments which are better compliances with humane underſtanding, which more naturally do ſatiſſie it, which are more humane and Chriſtian, than that way which ſatiſſies none, which deſtroys many, which provokes more, which makes all men jealous. To which add that thoſe who dye for their opinion, leave in all men, great arguments of the heartineſs of their belief, of the confidence of their perſuaſion, of the piety and innocency of their perſons, of the purity of their intention and ſimplicity of purpoſes; that they are perſons totally diſintereſt, and ſeparate from deſign. For no intereſt can be ſo great as to be put in balance againſt a mans life and his ſoul, and he does very imprudently ſerve his ends who ſeeingly and fore-knowingly loſes his life in the proſecution of them. Juſt as if *Titius* ſhould offer to die for *Sempronius* upon condition he might receive twenty talents when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great ſincerity, and a great hope when a man lays down his life in attestation of a propoſition. *Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life,* ſaith our bleſſed Saviour. And although laying of a wager is an argument of confidence more than truth, yet laying ſuch a wager, ſtaking of a mans Soul, and pawning his life gives a hearty testimony that the perſon

is

is honeſt, confident, reſigned, charitable and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a perſon or a cauſe more advantages, than theſe can do to an error. And therefore beſides the impiety, there is great imprudence in Canonizing a Heretick, and conſecrating an error by ſuch means, which were better preſerv'd as encouragements of truth, and comforts to real and true Martyrs. And it is not amiſs to obſerve that this very advantage was taken by Hereticks who were ready to ſhew and boaſt their Catalogues of Martyrs, in particular the *Circumcellians* did ſo, and the Donatiſts, and yet the firſt were Hereticks, the ſecond Schiſmaticks. And it was remarkable in the Scholars of *Priſcillian*, who, as they had their Maſter in the reputation of a Saint while he was living, ſo when he was dead, they had him in veneration as a Martyr; they with reverence and devotion carried his, and the bodies of his ſlain companions to an honourable ſepulture, and counted it Religion to ſwear by the name of *Priſcillian*. So that the extinguishing of the perſon, gives life and credit to his doctrine, and when he is dead he yet ſpeaks more effectually.

6. It is unnatural and unreaſonable to perſecute diſagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for Underſtanding being a thing wholly ſpiritual, cannot be reſtrained, and therefore neither puniſhed by corporal afflictions. It is in *alienâ republicâ*, a matter of another world; you may as well cure the colick by brushing a mans cloaths, or fill a mans belly with a ſyllogiſm: theſe things do not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action nor paſſion; and ſince all puniſhments in a prudent government

Numb. 10.

puniſh

puniſh the offender to prevent a future crime, and ſo it proves more medicinal than vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention: and ſince no puniſhment of the body can cure a diſeaſe in the ſoul, it is diſproportionable in nature, and in all civil government, to puniſh where the puniſhment can do no good. It may be an act of tyranny, but never of juſtice. For is an opinion ever the more true or falſe for being perſecuted? Some men have believed it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and vexed into a reſolution, but the thing it ſelf is not the truer, and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his underſtanding, for ſuch premiſſes can infer no concluſion, but that of a mans life: and a Wolf may as well give laws to the underſtanding, as he whoſe dictates are only propounded in violence, and writ in blood. And a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor diſcourſe in his choice, nor reaſon to ſatiſfie his diſcourſe. And as it is unnatural, ſo it is unreaſonable, that *Sempronius* ſhould force *Caius* to be of his opinion, becauſe *Sempronius* is Conſul this year, and commands the *Lictors*: As if he that can kill a man cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why ſhould I do violence to my conſcience, becauſe he can do violence to my perſon?

Numb. 11. 7. Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be ſatiſfied in his reaſon that his opinion is falſe, becauſe diſcountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he liſts, he

might

might cure many inconveniences of his life : all his fears and his sorrows would soon disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is persuaded, that such an accident that afflicts him is an evil, and such an object formidable ; let him but believe himself impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundred, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his sleeps need to be disturbed, nor his quietness discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him an hypocrite; but never to be a right believer, and so instead of erecting a trophee to God and true Religion, we build a Monument for the Devil. Infinite examples are recorded in Church story to this very purpose : But *Socrates* instances in one for all ; for when *Eleusius* Bishop of *Cyzicum* was threatned by the Emperor *Valens* with banishment and confiscation, If he did not subscribe to the decree of *Ariminum*, at last he yielded to the *Arrian* opinion, and presently fell into great torment of Conscience, openly at *Cyzicum* recanted the error, asked God and the Church forgiveness, and complain'd of the Emperors injustice, and that was all the good the *Arrian* party got by offering violence to his Conscience. And so many families in *Spain* which are as they call them new Christians, and of a suspected faith, into which they were forc'd by the tyranny of the Inquisition, and yet are secret *Moors*, is evidence enough, of the * inconvenience of preaching a doctrine in *in ore gladii cruentandi*. For it either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or forces him into a bad ; it either punishes

Ejusmodi sunt Hippocritum conversio, cujus quidem species deceptis August. ita ut opinaretur hareticos licet non morte trucidandos ut tamen coercendos. Experiencia enim demonstravit eos tam facile ad Arianismum transisse atque ad Catholicismum, cum Arriani Principes rerum in ea civitate potirentur.

sincerity,

fincerity, or perſuades hypocrifie; it perfecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to diſſemble and to be ſafe, but never to be honeſt.

Numb. 12.

8. It is one of the glories of Chriſtian Religion, that it was ſo pious, excellent, miraculous and perſuaſive, that it came in upon its own piety and wiſdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonſtration of the Spirit; a mighty ruſhing wind to beat down all ſtrong holds, and every high thought and imagination; but towards the perſons of men it was always full of meekneſs and charity, compliance and toleration, condeſcenſion and bearing with one another, *reſtoring perſons overtaken with an error, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering leſt we alſo be tempted.* The conſideration is as prudent, and the propoſition as juſt as the precept is charitable, and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are beſt conſerved with that which gives it the firſt being, and which is agreeable to its temper and conſtitution. That precept which it chiefly dreaches in order to all the bleſſedneſs in the world, that is of meekneſs, mercy and charity, ſhould alſo preſerve it ſelf and promote its own intereſt. For indeed nothing will do it ſo well, nothing doth ſo excellently inſinuate it ſelf into the underſtandings and affections of men, as when the actions and perſuaſions of a ſect, and every part and principle and promotion are univocal. And it would be a mighty diſparagement to ſo glorious an inſtitution, that in its principle it ſhould be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it ſo inhumane: And it would be improbable and unreaſonable that the ſword ſhould be uſed

in the perſuaſion of one propoſition, and yet in the perſuaſion of the whole Religion nothing like it. To do ſo, may ſerve the end of a temporal Prince, but never promote the honour of Chriſts Kingdom; it may ſecure a deſign of Spain, but will very much diſſerve Chriſtendom, to offer to ſupport it by that which good men believe to be a diſtinctive cogniſance of the Mahumetan Religion, from the excellency and piety of Chriſtianity, whoſe ſenſe and ſpirit is deſcribed in thoſe excellent words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 2. 24. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth.* They that oppoſe themſelves, muſt not be ſtricken by any of Gods ſervants; and if yet any man will ſmite theſe who are his oppoſites in opinion, he will get nothing by that, he muſt quit the title of being a ſervant of God for his pains. And I think a diſtinction of perſons Secular and Eccleſiaſtical will do no advantage for an eſcape, becauſe even the Secular power if it be Chriſtian, and a ſervant of God muſt not be *πλήμικθ' Δέλον Κυρίε εἰ δὲ μάχεας*, I mean in thoſe caſes where meekneſs of inſtruction is the remedy, or if the caſe be irremediable, abſciſſion by Cenſures is the penalty.

9. And if yet in the nature of the thing it *Numb. 13.* were neither unjuſt nor unreaſonable, yet there is nothing under God Almighty that hath power over the ſoul of man, ſo as to command a perſuaſion, or to judge a diſagreeing: Humane poſitive Laws direct all external acts in order to ſeveral ends, and the Judges take cogniſance accordingly, but no man can command the will, or puniſh him, that obeys the Law againſt his

T

will:

will : for becauſe its end is ſerved in external obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be ſerved by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet poſſibly the underſtanding is leſs ſubject to humane power than the will, for that humane power hath a command over external acts which naturally and regularly flow from the will, & *ut plurimum* ſuppoſe a direct act of will, but always either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidental ; but the underſtanding is a natural faculty ſubject to no command, but where the command is it ſelt a reaſon fit to ſatiſfie and perſuade it. And therefore God commanding us to believe ſuch revelations perſuades and ſatiſfies the underſtanding, by his commanding and revealing : for there is no greater probation in the world that a propoſition is true, than becauſe God hath commanded us to believe it. But becauſe no mans command is a ſatiſfaction to the underſtanding, or a verification of the propoſition, therefore the underſtanding is not ſubject to humane authority. They may perſuade, but not enjoyn where God hath not ; and where God hath, if it appears ſo to him, he is an Infidel if he does not believe it. And if all men have no other efficacy or authority on the underſtanding but by perſuaſion, propoſal and intreaty, then a man is bound to aſſent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energy of perſuaſion, neither indeed can he, though he would never ſo fain, and he that out of fear and too much compliance and deſire to be ſafe, ſhall deſire to bring his underſtanding with ſome luxation to the belief of humane dictates and authorities, may as often miſs of the truth as hit it, but is ſure always to loſe the comfort of truth,

truth, becauſe he believes it upon indirecť, inſufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his deſire it ſhould be ſo is his beſt argument that it is ſo, ſo the pleaſing of men is his beſt reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted all the poſſeſſion of a truth.

S E C T. XIV.

Of the practice of Chriſtian Churches towards perſons diſagreeing, and when perſecution firſt came in.

AND thus this truth hath been practiſed in *Numb. 1.* all times of Chriſtian Religion, when there were no collateral deſigns on foot, nor intereſts to be ſerved, nor paſſions to be ſatiſfied. In *St. Paul's* time, though the cenſure of heresy were not ſo looſe and forward as afterwards, and all that were called Hereticks were clearly ſuch, and highly criminal; yet as their crime was, ſo was their cenſure, that is, ſpiritual. They were firſt admoniſhed, once at leaſt; for ſo * *Irenaus*, † *Tertullian*, || *Cyprian*, * *L. 3. cap. 3.* * *Ambroſe*, and † *Hierom* read that place of † *De preſcript.* *Titus III.* But ſince that time all men, and at || *Lib. ad Quirinum.* that time ſome read it, *Post unam & alteram admonitionem*, reject a Heretick. Rejection * *In hunc locum.* from the communion of Saints after two warnings, that's the penalty. Saint *John* expreſſes † *Ibidem.* it by not *eating* with them, not bidding them *God ſpeed*, but the perſons againſt whom he decrees ſo ſeverely, are ſuch as denyed Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, direct Antichriſts: and

let the ſentence be as high as it liſts in this caſe, all that I obſerve is, that ſince in ſo damnable doctrines nothing but ſpiritual cenſure, ſeparation from the communion of the faithful was enjoined and preſcribed, we cannot pretend to an Apoſtolic precedent, if in matters of diſpute and innocent queſtion, and of great uncertainty and no malignity we ſhould proceed to ſentence of death.

Numb. 2.

For it is but an abſurd and illiterate arguing, to ſay that excommunication is a greater puniſhment, and killing, a leſs; and therefore whoever may be excommunicated may alſo be put to death (which indeed is the reaſoning that *Bellarmino* uſes) for firſt, excommunication is not directly, and of it ſelf a greater puniſhment than corporal death. Becauſe it is indefinite, and incompleat, and in order to a further puniſhment, which if it happens, then the excommunication was the inlet to it, if it does not, the excommunication did not ſignifie half ſo much as the loſs of a member, much leſs, death. For it may be totally ineffectual, either by the iniquity of the proceeding, or repentance of the perſon: and in all times and caſes it is a medicine if the man pleaſe; if he will not, but perſeveres in his impiety, then it is himſelf that brings the Cenſure to effect, that actuates the judgment and gives a ſting, and an energy upon that which otherwiſe would be $\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\ \alpha\kappa\rho\rho\theta$. Secondly, but when it is at worſt, it does not kill the Soul, it only conſigns it to that death which it had deſerved, and ſhould have received independently from that ſentence of the Church. Thirdly, and yet excommunication is to admirable purpoſe; for whether it refers to the perſon cenſured or to others,

others,

others, it is prudential in it ſelf, it is exemplary to others, it is medicinal to all. For the perſon cenſured, is by this means threatned into piety, and the threatning made the more energetical upon him becauſe by fiction of Law, or as it were by a Sacramental repreſentment the pains of hell are made preſential to him; and ſo becomes an act of prudent judicature, and excellent diſcipline, and the beſt inſtrument of ſpiritual Government: Becauſe the nearer the threatning is reduced to matter, and the more preſent and circumſtationable it is made, the more operative it is upon our ſpirits while they are immerged in matter. And this is the full ſenſe and power of excommunication in its direct intention: conſequently and accidentally other evils might follow it, as in the times of the Apoſtles, the cenſured perſons were buffeted by Satan, and even at this day there is leſs ſecurity even to the temporal condition of ſuch a perſon whom his ſpiritual parents have Anathematiz'd. But beſides this, I know no warrant to affirm any thing of excommunication, for the ſentence of the Church does but declare, not effect the final ſentence of damnation. Whoever deſerves excommunication deſerves damnation; and he that repents ſhall be ſaved, though he dye out of the Churches external Communion, and if he does not repent, he ſhall be damn'd though he was not excommunicate.

But ſuppoſe it greater than the ſentence of *Numb. 3.* corporal death, yet it follows not, becauſe hereticks may be excommunicate, therefore kill'd, for from a greater to a leſs, in a ſeveral kind of things, the argument concludes not. It is a greater thing to make an excellent diſcourſe

than to make a ſhoo, yet he that can do the greater cannot do this leſs. An Angel cannot beget a man, and yet he can do a greater matter in that kind of operations which we term ſpiritual and Angelical. And if this were concluding that whoever may be excommunicate may be kill'd, then, becauſe of excommunications the Church is confeſſed the ſole and intire Judge, ſhe is alſo an abſolute diſpoſer of the lives of perſons. I believe this will be but ill doctrine in *Spain*: for in *Bullâ Cœnæ Domini*, the King of *Spain* is every year excommunicated on Maunday Thursday; but if by the ſame power he might alſo be put to death (as upon this ground he may) the Pope might with more eaſe be inveſted in that part of St. *Peter's* patrimony which that King hath invaded and ſurpriz'd. But beſides this, it were extreme harſh Doctrine in a Roman Conſistory, from whence excommunications iſſue for trifles, for fees, for not ſuffering themſelves infinitely to be oppreſſed, for any thing; if this be greater than death, how great a tyranny is that which does more than kill men for leſs than trifles, or elſe how inconſequent is that argument which concludes its purpoſe upon ſo falſe pretence and ſuppoſition?

Numb. 4.

Well, however zealous the Apoſtles were againſt Hereticks, yet none were by them, or their dictates put to death. The death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and the blindneſs of *Elymas* the Sorcerer amount not to this, for they were miraculous inflictions: and the firſt was a puniſhment to Vow-breach and Sacrilege, the ſecond of Sorcery, and open conteſtation againſt the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt; neither of them concerned the caſe of this preſent queſtion: or if the caſe were the ſame, yet the authority is

not

not the same: For he that inflicted these punishments was infallible, and of a power competent: But no man at this day is so. But as yet, people were converted by Miracles, and Preaching, and Disputing, and Hereticks by the same means were redargued, and all men instructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till Christian people were vexed by disagreeing persons, and were impatient and peevish, by their own too much confidence and the luxuriancy of a prosperous fortune: but then they would not endure persons that did dogmatize any thing which might intrench upon their reputation or their interest. And it is observable that no man, nor no age did ever teach the lawfulness of putting Hereticks to death, till they grew wanton with prosperity. But when the reputation of the Governours was concerned, when the interests of men were endangered, when they had something to lose, when they had built their estimation upon the credit of disputable questions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they overvalued themselves and their own opinions, when some persons invaded Bishopricks upon pretence of new opinions, then they as they thrived in the favour of Emperours, and in the success of their disputes, solicited the temporal power to banish, to fine, to imprison, and to kill their adversaries.

So that the case stands thus. In the best *Numb. 5.* times, amongst the best men, when there were fewer temporal ends to be served, when Religion and the pure and simple designs of Christianity were only to be promoted; in those times and amongst such men, no persecution was actual, nor persuaded nor allowed towards disagreeing

agreeing perſons. But as men had ends of their own and not of Chriſts, as they receded from their duty, and Religion from its purity, as Chriſtianity began to be compounded with intereſts, and blended with temporal deſigns, ſo men were persecuted for their opinions. This is moſt apparent, if we conſider when perſecution firſt came in, and if we obſerve how it was checked by the holieſt and the wiſeſt perſons.

Numb. 6. The firſt great inſtance I ſhall note was in *Priſcillian* and his followers, who were condemned to death by the Tyrant *Maximus*. Which inſtance although St. *Hierom* obſerves as a puniſhment, and judgment for the crime of heresy, yet is of no uſe in the preſent queſtion, becauſe *Maximus* put ſome Chriſtians of all ſorts to death promiſcuouſly, Catholick and Heretick without choice, and therefore the *Priſcillianiſts* might as well have called it a judgment upon the Catholicks, as the Catholicks upon them.

Numb. 7. But when *Urfauſ* and *Statius*, two Biſhops, procured the *Priſcillianiſts* death by the power they had at Court: St. *Martin* was ſo angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And St. *Ambroſe* upon the ſame ſtock denied his communion to the *Itaciani*. And the account that *Sulpitius* gives of the ſtory is this, *Hoc modo* (ſays he) *homines luce indigniſſimi peſſimo exemplo necati ſunt*. The example was worſe than the men. If the men were heretical, the execution of them however was unchriſtian.

Numb. 8. But it was of more authority that the Nicene Fathers ſuppllicated the Emperour, and prevailed for the baniſhment of *Arius*, of this we can give no other account, but that by the Hiſtory of the time we ſee baſeneſs enough, and perſonal miſdemour, and factionneſs of ſpirit in

Arius,

*Sozom. l. 1.
c. 20.*

Arius, to have deſerved worſe than baniſhment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the balance; which we have reaſon to believe was not ſo much as conſidered, becauſe *Conſtantine* gave toleration to differing opinions, and *Arius* himſelf was reſtored upon ſuch conditions to his country and office, which would not ſtand with the ends of the Catholicks, if they had been ſevere exactors of concurrence and union of perſuaſions.

I am ſtill within the ſcene of Eccleſiaſtical perſons, and am conſidering what the opinion of the learnedeſt and the holieſt prelates were concerning this great queſtion. If we will believe *St. Auſtin* (who was a credible perſon) no good man did allow it. *Nullis tamen bonis in Catholicâ hoc placet, ſi uſq; ad mortem in quenquam licet hæreticum ſeviat.* This was *St. Auſtin's* final opinion; For he had firſt been of the mind that it was not honeſt to do any violence to miſ-perſuaded perſons; and when upon an accident happening in *Hippo* he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then alſo he excepted death, and would by no means have any meer opinion made capital. But for ought appears, *St. Auſtin* had greater reaſon to have retracted that retractation, than his firſt opinion. For his ſaying of *nullis bonis placet* was as true as the thing was reaſonable it ſhould be ſo. Witneſs thoſe known teſtimonies of (a) *Tertullian*, (b) *Cyprian*, (c) *Lactantius*, (d) *Hierom*, (e) *Severus Sulpitius*, (f) *Minutius*, (g) *Hilary*, (h) *Damaſcen*, (i) *Chryſoſtom*, (k) *Theophylaſt*, and (l) *Bernard*, and divers others, whom the Reader may find quoted by the Archbiſhop of *Spalato*, Lib. 8. de rep. Eccleſ. cap. 8.

Socrat. l. 1. c. 26. cont.
Crefcon. Grammat. lib. 3. c. 50. viae etiam *Epist.* 61. ad *Dulcilium*. Et *Epist.* 158. & 1. 9. & lib. 1. c. 29. cont. tit. *Petilian.* vide etiam *Socrat.* li. 3. c. 3. & c. 29.

Lib. 2. cap. 5. retractat. vide *Epist.* 48. ad *Vincent.* script. poſt retract. & *Epist.* 50. ad *Bonifac.*

(a) ad *Scapulam.*

(b) Lib. 3. *Epist.*

(c) Lib. 5. c. 20.

(d) In cap. 13. *Matth.* & in cap. 2. *Hof.*

(e) In vit. *S. Martin.*

(f) *Octav.*

(g) *Cont. Auxent. Arr.*

(h) 3. *Seſt.* C. 32.

(i) In cap. 13. *Marth.* hom. 47.

(k) In *Evang.* *Marth.*

(l) In verba *Apoſt.* fides ex auditu.

Numb. 10. Againſt this concurrent testimony my reading can furnish me with no adversary, nor contrary instances, but in *Atticus* of *C. P. Theodosius* of *Synada*, in *Statius* and *Ursus* before reckoned. Only indeed some of the later Popes of *Rome* began to be busie and unmerciful, but it was then when themselves were secure, and their interests great, and their temporal concerns highly considerable.

Numb. 11. For it is most true, and not amiss to observe it, that no man who was under the ferula did ever think it lawful to have opinions forced, or Hereticks put to death, and yet many men who themselves have escaped the danger of a pile and a faggot, have changed their opinion just as the case was altered, that is, as themselves were unconcern'd in the suffering. *Petilian*, *Parmenian*, and *Gaudentius*, by no means would allow it lawful, for themselves were in danger, and were upon that side that is ill thought of and discountenanc'd: but * *Gregory* and † *Leo*, Popes of *Rome*, upon whose side the authority and advantages were, thought it lawful they should be punish'd and persecuted, for themselves were unconcerned in the danger of suffering. And therefore *St. Gregory* commends the Exarch of *Ravenna*, for forcing them who dissented from those men who called themselves the Church. And there were some Divines in the Lower *Germany*, who upon great reasons spake against the tyranny of the Inquisition, and restraining Propheſying, who yet when they had shaken off the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their Brethren. It was unjust in them, in all men unreasonable and uncharitable, and often increases the error, but never lessens the danger.

Numb. 12. But yet although the Church, I mean, in her distinct and Clerical capacity, was against destroying

Apuł. Aug.
lib. 1. c. 7.
cont. Epist.
Parmenian.
& 1. 2. c. 10.
cont. tit. Petilian.

* *Epist. 1. ad Turbium.*

† *Lib. 1. ep. 72.*

stroyin
the Po
suade
the Er
and t
with i
respec
count
ceed
might
and p
this,
the d
Heret
Empe
of di
on of
violat
not c
or wh
not a
Princ
Laws
vers
tine
cum
nem
decr
tur;
ager
Phot
der
tists
agai
cuni
seve
mad

ſtroying or puniſhing difference in opinion, till the Popes of *Rome* did ſuper-feminate and perſuade the contrary, yet the Biſhops did perſuade the Emperours to make Laws againſt Hereticks, and to puniſh diſobedient perſons with fines, with impriſonment, with death and baniſhment reſpectively. This indeed calls us to a new account. For the Church-men might not proceed to blood nor corporal inflictions, but might they not deliver over to the Secular arm, and perſuade temporal Princes to do it? For this, I am to ſay, that ſince it is notorious that the doctrine of the Clergy was againſt puniſhing Hereticks, the Laws which were made by the Emperours againſt them might be for reſtraint of differing Religion in order to the preſervation of the publick peace, which is too frequently violated by the diviſion of opinions. But I am not certain whether that was always the reaſon, or whether or no ſome Biſhops of the Court did not alſo ſerve their own ends in giving their Princes ſuch untoward counſel; but we find the Laws made ſeverally to ſeveral purpoſes, in divers caſes and with different ſeverity. *Conſtan-* Apud Euseb. de vita Conſtant.
tine the Emperour made a Sanction, *Ut parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant pacis & quietis fruitio-*
nem gaudentes accipiant. The Emperour *Gratian*
 decreed, *Ut quam quiſq; vellet religionem ſequere-*
tur; & conventus Eccleſiaſticos ſemoto metu omnes
agerent. But he excepted the Manichees, the *Photinians*, and *Eunomians*. *Theodoſius* the el- Vide Socrat. l. 7. c. 12.
 der made a Law of death againſt the Anabap-
 tiſts of his time, and baniſh'd *Eunomius*, and
 againſt other erring perſons appointed a pe-
 cuniary mulct; but he did no executions ſo
 ſevere as his ſanctions, to ſhew they were
 made *in terrorem* only. So were the Laws of
Valentinian

Vid. Cod. de heretic. L. manichees. & leg. Arriani, & l. Quicumque.

• Apud Paulum Diaconum. l. 36. & l. 24. Numb. 13.

Valentinian and Martian, decreeing *contra omnes qui prava docere tenent*, that they should be put to death; so did * Michael the Emperour, but Justinian only decreed banishment.

But what ever whispers some Politicks might make to their Princes, as the wisest and holiest did not think it lawful for Church-men alone to do executions, so neither did they transmit such persons to the Secular Judicature. And therefore when the Edict of *Macedonius* the President was so ambiguous, that it seemed to threaten death to Hereticks, unless they recanted; St. *Austin* admonished him carefully to provide that no Heretick should be put to death, alledging it also not only to be unchristian, but illegal also, and not warranted by imperial constitutions; for before his time no Laws were made for their being put to death: but however he prevailed, that *Macedonius* published another Edict, more explicate, and less seemingly severe. But in his Epistle to *Donatus*, the African Proconsul, he is more confident and determinate, *Necessitate nobis in pactâ & indictâ, ut potius occidi ab eis eligamus, quam eos occidendos vestris judiciis ingeramus.*

Numb. 14.

But afterwards many got a trick of giving them over to the Secular power, which at the best is no better than hypocrisy, removing envy from themselves, and laying it upon others, a refusing to do that in external act, which they do in Council and approbation: which is a transmitting the act to another, and retaining a proportion of guilt unto themselves, even their own and the others too. I end this with the saying of *Chrysostom*, *Dogmata impia & quæ ab hereticis profecta sunt arguere & anathematizare oportet, hominibus autem parcendum & pro salute eorum orandum.*

Serm. de Anathematizate.

S E C T.

S E C T. XV.

*How far the Church or Governors may act to
the restraining false or differing opinions.*

BUT although Heretical persons are not to be *Numb. 1.*
destroyed, yet Heresy being a work of the
flesh, and all Hereticks criminal persons, whose
acts and doctrine have influence upon Communi-
ties of men whether Ecclesiastical or civil, the
governours of the Republick, or Church respec-
tively are to do their duties in restraining those
mischiefs which may happen to their several
charges, for whose indemnity they are answer-
able. And therefore according to the effect or
malice of the doctrine or the person, so the cog-
nizance of them belongs to several judicatures.
If it be false doctrine in any capacity and doth
mischief in any sense, or teaches ill life in any
instance, or encourages evil in any particular,
καὶ ὁμιλεῖν, these men must be silenced, they
must be convinced by sound doctrine, and put
to silence by spiritual evidence and restrained
by authority Ecclesiastical, that is, by spiritual
censures according as it seems necessary to him
who is most concern'd in the regiment of the
Church. For all this we have precept and prece-
dent Apostolical, and much reason. For by thus
doing, the governour of the Church uses all that
authority that is competent, and all the means
that is reasonable, and that proceeding which is
regular, that he may discharge his cure and secure
his flock. And that he possibly may be deceived in
judging a doctrine to be heretical, and by conse-
quence the person excommunicate suffers injury,
is

is no argument againſt the reaſonableneſs of the proceeding. For all the injury that is, is viſible and in appearance, and ſo is his crime. Judges muſt judge according to their beſt reaſon guided by the Law of God as their rule, and by evidence and appearance as their beſt inſtrument, and they can judge no better. If the Judges be good and prudent, the error of proceeding will not be great, nor ordinary, and there can be no better eſtabliſhment of humane judicature, than is a fallible proceeding upon an infallible ground; And if the judgment of Hereſy be made by eſtimate and proportion of the opinion to a good or a bad life reſpectively, ſuppoſing an error in the deduction, there will be no malice in the concluſion; and that he endeavours to ſecure piety according to the beſt of his underſtanding, and yet did miſtake in his proceeding, is only an argument that he did his duty after the manner of men, poſſibly with the Piety of a Saint, though not with the underſtanding of an Angel. And the little inconvenience that happens to the perſon injuriouſly judged is abundantly made up in the excellency of the Diſcipline, the goodneſs of the example, the care of the publick, and all thoſe great influences into the manners of men which derive from ſuch an act ſo publickly conſign'd. But ſuch publick judgment in matters of opinion muſt be ſeldom and curious, and never but to ſecure piety, and a holy life: for in matters ſpeculative as all determinations are fallible, ſo ſcarce any of them are to purpoſe, nor ever able to make compenſation of either ſide, either for the publick fraction, or the particular injuſtice if it ſhould ſo happen in the censure.

But then as the Church may proceed thus far, *Numb. 2.*
yet no Christian man, or Community of men
may proceed farther. For if they be deceived
in their judgment and censure, and yet have
passed only spiritual censures, they are totally
ineffectual, and come to nothing, there is no
effect remaining upon the Soul, and such cen-
sures are not to meddle with the Body so much
as indirectly. But if any other judgment pass
upon persons erring, such judgments whose ef-
fects remain, if the person be unjustly censured,
nothing will answer and make compensation for
such injuries. If a person be excommunicate
unjustly, it will do him no hurt, but if he be
killed or dismembred unjustly, that censure and
infliction is not made ineffectual by his inno-
cence, he is certainly kill'd and dismembred.
So that as the Churches authority in such cases
be restrained and made prudent, cautelous, and
orderly, is just and competent: so the pro-
ceeding is reasonable, it is provident for the
publick and the inconveniences that may fall
upon particulars so little, as that the publick
benefit makes ample compensation, so long as
the proceeding is but spiritual.

This discourse is in the case of such opinions, *Numb. 3.*
which by the former rules are formal heresies,
and upon practical inconveniences. But for
matters of question which have not in them an
injury to the publick tranquillity, as the Repub-
lick hath nothing to do, upon the ground of all
the former discourses; so if the Church meddles
with them where they do not derive into ill-
life, either in the person or in the consequent,
nor else are destructions of the foundation of Re-
ligion, which is all one, for that those funda-
mental articles are of greatest necessity in order
to

to a vertuous and godly life, which is wholly built upon them, (and therefore are principally neceſſary.) If ſhe meddles further, otherwiſe than by preaching, and conferring, and exhortation, ſhe becomes tyrannical in her government, makes her ſelf an immediate judge of conſciences and perſuaſions, lords it over their faith, deſtroys unity, and charity; and as if he that dogmatizes the opinion becomes criminal, if he troubles the Church with an immodest, peeviſh, and pertinacious propoſal of his article, not ſimply neceſſary; ſo the Church does not do her duty, if ſhe ſo condemns it *pro tribunali* as to enjoyn him and all her ſubjects to believe the contrary. And as there may be pertinacy in doctrine, ſo there may be pertinacy in judging, and both are faults. The peace of the Church and the unity of her doctrine is beſt conſerved when it is judged by the proportion it hath to that rule of unity which the Apoſtles gave, that is the Creed for Articles of meer belief, and the precepts of Jeſus Chriſt, and the practical rules of piety, which are moſt plain and eaſy, and without controverſy, ſet down in the Goſpels, and Writings of the Apoſtles. But to multiply articles, and adopt them into the family of the faith, and to require aſſent to ſuch articles which (as St. Paul's phraſe is) are of doubtful diſputation, equal to that aſſent we give to matters of faith, is to build a Tower upon the top of a Bulruſh, and the further the effect of ſuch proceedings does extend, the worſe they are; the very making ſuch a Law is unreaſonable, the inflicting ſpiritual cenſures upon them that cannot do ſo much violence to their underſtanding as to obey it, is unjuſt and ineffectual; but to puniſh the perſon with death,

or

or with corporal infliction, indeed it is effectual, but it is therefore tyrannical. We have ſeen what the Church may do towards reſtraining falſe or differing opinions, next I ſhall conſider by way of Corollary what the Prince may do as for his intereſt, and only in ſecuring his People, and ſerving the ends of true Religion.

S E C T. XVI.

Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to ſeveral Religions.

FOR upon theſe very grounds we may eaſily give account of that great queſtion, Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to ſeveral Religions. *Numb. 1.*

For firſt, it is a great fault that men will call the ſeveral Sects of Chriſtians by the names of ſeveral Religions. The Religion of JESUS CHRIST is the form of ſound doctrine and whoſome words, which is ſet down in Scripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plain places, and ſeparated as for the queſtion of neceſſary or not neceſſary by the ſymbol of the Apoſtles. Thoſe impertinencies which the wantonneſs and vanity of men hath commenced, which their intereſts have promoted, which ſerve not truth ſo much as their own ends, are far from being diſtinct Religions; for matters of opinion are no parts of the worſhip of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his Commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are in that proportion as they contribute parts and actions, and minute particulars

V

culars of that Religion to whoſe end they do, or pretend to ſerve. And ſuch are all the Sects and all the pretences of Chriſtians, but pieces and minutes of Chriſtianity, if they do ſerve the great end, as every man for his own Sect and Intereſt believes for his ſhare it does.

Numb. 2.

2. Toleration hath a double ſenſe or purpoſe, for ſometimes by it Men underſtand a publick licence and exerciſe of a Sect: Sometimes it is only an indemnity of the perſons privately to convene and to opine as they ſee cauſe, and as they mean to answer to God. Both theſe are very much to the ſame purpoſe, unleſs ſome perſons whom we are bound to ſatisfie be ſcandaliz'd, and then the Prince is bound to do as he is bound to ſatisfie. To God it is all one. For abſtracting from the offence of perſons, which is to be conſidered juſt as our obligation is to content the perſons, it is all one whether we indulge to them to meet publickly or privately, to do actions of Religion concerning which we are not perſuaded that they are truly holy. To God it is juſt one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the ſame, only the circumſtance of publick and private is different, which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concern any thing but the matter of Scandal and relation to the minds and fantaſies of certain perſons.

Numb. 3.

3. So that to tolerate is not to perſecute. And the queſtion whether the Prince may tolerate divers perſuaſions, is no more than whether he may lawfully perſecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this caſe he is juſt ſo to tolerate diverſity of perſuaſions as he is to tolerate publick actions, for no opinion is judicable, nor no perſon puniſhable, but for a ſin, and if his opinion by reaſon of its managing, or its effect,

is a ſin in it ſelf, or becomes a ſin to the perſon, when as he is to do towards other ſins, ſo to that opinion or man ſo opining. But to believe ſo, or not ſo, when there is no more but meer believing, is not in his power to enjoyn, therefore not to puniſh. And it is not only lawful to tolerate diſagreeing perſuaſions, but the authority of God only is competent to take notice of it, and infallible to determine it, and fit to judge, and therefore no humane authority is ſufficient to do all thoſe things which can juſtifie the inflicting temporal puniſhments upon ſuch as do not conform in their perſuaſions to a rule or authority which is not only fallible, but ſuppoſed by the diſagreeing perſon to be actually deceived.

But I conſider that in the toleration of a different opinion, Religion is not properly and immediately concerned, ſo as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be ſafe in diverſity of perſuaſions, and its alſo a part of Chriſtian * Religion that the liberty of Mens Conſciences ſhould be preſerved in all things, where God hath not ſet a limit and made a reſtraint; that the Soul of Man ſhould be free, and acknowledge no maſter but Jeſus Chriſt; that matters ſpiritual ſhould not be reſtrain'd by puniſhments corporal; that the ſame meekneſs and charity ſhould be preſerved in the promotion of Chriſtianity, that gave foundation and increment, and firmneſs in its firſt publication; that concluſions ſhould not be more dogmatical than the vertual reſolution and efficacy of the premiſes: And that the perſons ſhould not more certainly be condemned than their opinions confuted; and laſtly, that the inſirmities of Men and difficulties of things ſhould be both put in balance to make abatement in the definitive ſentence againſt mens perſons. But

Numb. 4.

** Humani juris & naturalis potestatis, unicuique quod putaverit, cogere. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, qua suscipi sponte debet, non vi. Tertul. ad Scapulam.*

then becauſe toleration of opinions is not properly a queſtion of Religion, it may be a queſtion of policy: And although a man may be a good Chriſtian though he believe an error not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally diſturb the publick peace through the over-activenefs of the perſon, and the confidence of their belief and the opinion of its appendant neceſſity, and therefore toleration of differing perſuaſions in theſe caſes is to be conſidered upon political grounds, and is juſt ſo to be admitted or denied as the opinion or toleration of them may conſiſt with the publick and neceſſary ends of Government. Only this: As Chriſtian Princes muſt look to the intereſt of their Government, ſo eſpecially muſt they conſider the intereſts of Chriſtianity, and not call every redargution or modeſt diſcovery of an eſtabliſhed error, by the name of diſturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that the peeviſhneſs and impatience of contradiction in the Governours may break the peace. Let them remember but the gentleneſs of Chriſtianity, the Liberty of Conſciences which ought to be preſerved, and let them do juſtice to the perſon who ever they are that are peeviſh, provided no mans perſon be over-born with prejudice. For if it be neceſſary for all men to ſubſcribe to the preſent eſtabliſh'd Religion, by the ſame reaſon at another time a man may be bound to ſubſcribe to the contradictory, and ſo to all Religions in the World. And they only, who by their too much confidence intitle God to all their fancies and make them to be queſtions of Religion, and evidences for Heaven, or conſignations to Heav'n, they only think this doctrine unreaſonable, and they are the men that firſt diſturb the Church

peace, and then think there is no appealing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that conſider things wiſely, underſtand that ſince ſalvation and damnation depend not upon imper- tinencies, and yet that publick peace and tran- quility may, the Prince is in this caſe to ſeek how to ſecure Government, and the iſſues and inten- tions of that, while there is in theſe Caſes directly no inſecurity to Religion, unleſs by the acciden- tal uncharitableneſs of them that diſpute: Which uncharitableneſs is alſo much prevented when the publick peace is ſecured, and no perſon is on either ſide engag'd upon * revenge, or trou- bled with diſgrace, or vexed with puniſhments by any decretory ſentence againſt him. It was the ſaying of a wiſe States-man (I mean *Thuanus*) *Heretici qui pace data factionibus ſcinduntur, per- ſecutione ununtur contra Remp.* If you perſecute Hereticks or Diſcrepant, they unite themſelves to a common defence: If you permit them, they divide themſelves upon private intereſt, and the rather, if this intereſt was an ingredient of the opinion.

* *Dextera prae-
cipue capit in-
dulgentia
mentes,
Asperitas o-
dium ſequaque
bella parit.*

The Sum is this, it concerns the duty of a Prince becauſe it concerns the honour of God, that all vices and every part of ill life be diſcoun- tenanced and reſtrained; And therefore in rela- tion to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For the underſtanding being to direct the will, and opinions to guide our practices, they are conſi- derable only as they teach impiety and vice, as they either diſhonour God or diſobey him. Now all ſuch doctrines are to be condemned; but for the perſons preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they neither juſtifie nor approve the pretended Con- ſequences which are certainly impious, they are to be ſeparated from that conſideration. But if

Numb. 51

they know ſuch conſequences and allow them, or if they do not ſtay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take ſin before hand, and manage them impiouſly in any ſenſe; or if either themſelves or their doctrine do really and without colour or fained pretext, diſturb the publick peace

* *Extat prudenſis monitum
Mecanatis apud
Dionem Caſſium ad
Auguſtum in
hæc verba. Eos
vero qui in Di-
vinis aliquod
innovant, odio
habere & coerce,
non Decorum
ſolum cauſa:
ſed quia nova
numina hi ta-
les introducen-*

*tes multos impellunt ad mutationem rerum. Unde conjurationes, ſeditiones, conciliabula in-
ſiſtunt, res proſectio minime conducibiles principatui. Et legibus quoq; expreſſum eſt, quod
religionem committitur, in omnium fertur injuriam.*

* and juſt intereſts, they are not to be ſuffered. In all other caſes it is not only lawful to permit them, but it is alſo neceſſary, that Princes and all in authority ſhould not perſecute diſcrepant opinions. And in ſuch caſes wherein perſons not otherwiſe incompetent are bound to reprove an error, (as they are in many) in all theſe if the Prince makes reſtraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the Laws of JESUS CHRIST.

S E C T. XVII.

Of compliance with diſagreeing Perſons or weak Conſciences in general.

Numb. 1.

UPON theſe grounds it remains that we reduce this doctrine to practical Concluſions and conſider among the differing ſects and opinions which trouble theſe parts of Chriſtendom and come into our concernment, which Sects of Chriſtians are to be tolerated, and how far? and which are to be reſtrain'd and puniſh'd in theſe ſeveral proportions?

Numb. 2.

The firſt conſideration is, that ſince diverſity of opinions does more concern publick peace than religion, what is to be done to perſons who

diſobey a publick ſanction upon a true allegation; that they cannot believe it to be lawful to obey ſuch conſtitutions, although they diſbelieve them upon inſufficient grounds, that is, whether in *conſtituta lege* diſagreeing perſons or weak conſciences are to be complied withall, and their diſobeying and diſagreeing tolerated?

1. In this queſtion there is no diſtinction can *Numb. 3.* be made between perſons truly weak, and but pretending ſo. For all that pretend to it, are to be allowed the ſame liberty whatſoever it be; for no mans ſpirit is known to any, but to God and himſelf: and therefore pretences and realities in this caſe, are both alike in order to the publick toleration. And this very thing is one argument to perſuade a Negative. For the chief thing in this caſe is the concernment of publick government, which is then moſt of all violated, when what may prudently be permitted to ſome purpoſes, may be demanded to many more, and the piety of the Laws abuſed to the impiety of other mens ends. And if Laws be made ſo malleable, as to comply with weak conſciences, he that hath a mind to diſobey, is made impregnable againſt the coercitive power of the Law by this pretence. For a weak conſcience ſignifies nothing in this caſe, but a diſlike of the Law upon a contrary perſuaſion. For if ſome weak conſciences do obey the Law, and others do not, it is not their weakneſs indefinitely that is the cauſe of it, but a definite and particular perſuaſion to the contrary. So that if ſuch a pretence be excuſe ſufficient from obeying, then the law is a ſanction obliging every one to obey that hath a mind to it, and he that hath not, may chooſe, that is, it is no Law at all, for he that hath a mind to it may do it if there be no Law,

and he that hath no mind to it need not for all the Law.

Numb. 4. And therefore the wit of man cannot prudently frame a law of that temper, and expedient, but either he muſt loſe the formality of a Law, and neither have power coercitive nor obligatory, but *ad arbitrium inferiorum*, or elſe it cannot antecedently to the particular caſe give leave to any ſort of men to diſagree or diſobey.

Numb. 5. 2. Suppose that a Law be made with great reaſon ſo as to ſatiſſie divers perſons pious and prudent, that it complies with the neceſſity of government, and promotes the intereſt of Gods ſervice and publick order, it may eaſily be imagined that theſe perſons which are obedient ſons of the Church, may be as zealous for the publick order and diſcipline of the Church, as others for their opinion againſt it, and may be as much ſcandalized if diſobedience be tolerated, as others are if the Law be exacted, and what ſhall be done in this caſe? Both ſorts of men cannot be complied withall, becauſe as theſe pretend to be offended at the Law, and by conſequence (if they underſtand the conſequents of their own opinion) at them that obey the Law: ſo the others are juſtly offended at them that unjuſtly diſobey it. If therefore there be any on the right ſide as confident and zealous as they who are on the wrong ſide, then the diſagreeing perſons are not to be complied with, to avoid giving offence; for if they be, offence is given to better perſons, and ſo the miſchief, which ſuch complying ſeeks to prevent, is made greater and more unjuſt, obedience is diſcouraged, and diſobedience is legally canonized for the reſult of a holy and a tender conſcience.

3. Such

3. Such complying with the diſagreeings of a *Numb. 6.* fort of men, is the total overthrow of all Diſcipline, and it is better to make no Laws of publick worſhip, than to reſcind them in the very conſtitution: and there can be no end in making the ſanction, but to make the Law ridiculous, and the authority contemptible. For to ſay that complying with weak conſciences in the very framing of a Law of Diſcipline, is the way to preſerve unity, were all one as to ſay, To take away all Laws is the beſt way to prevent diſobedience. In ſuch matters of indifferency, the beſt way of cementing the fraction, is to unite the parts in the authority, for then the queſtion is but one, *viz.* Whether the authority muſt be obeyed or not? But if a permiſſion be given of diſputing the particulars, the queſtions become next to infinite. A Mirrour when it is broken represents the object multiplyed and divided: but if it be entire and through one center tranſmits the ſpecies to the eye, the Viſion is one and natural. Laws are the Mirror in which men are to dreſs and compoſe their actions, and therefore muſt not be broken with ſuch claules of exception which may without remedy be abuſed to the prejudice of authority, and peace, and all humane ſanctions. And I have known in ſome Churches that this pretence hath been nothing but a deſign to diſcredit the Law, to diſmantle the authority that made it, to raiſe their own credit, and a trophy of their zeal, to make it a characteriſtick note of a Sect, and the cogniſance of holy perſons, and yet the men that claim'd exemption from the Laws, upon pretence of having weak Conſciences, if in hearty expreſſion you had told them ſo to their heads, they would have ſpit in your face, and were ſo far from confeſſing them-

themselves weak, that they thought themselves able to give Laws to Christendom, to instruct the greatest Clerks, and to Catechize the Church her self; And which is the worst of all, they who were perpetually clamorous that the severity of the Laws should slacken as to their particular, and in matter adiaphorous (in which, if the Church hath any authority, she hath power to make Laws) to indulge a leave to them to do as they list, yet were the most imperious amongst men, most decretory in their sentences, and most impatient of any disagreeing from them, though in the least minute and particular: whereas by all the justice of the world, they who persuade such a compliance in matters of fact, and of so little question, should not deny to tolerate persons that differ in questions of great difficulty and contestation.

Numb. 7.

4. But yet since all things almost in the world have been made matters of dispute, and the will of some Men, and the malice of others, and the infinite industry and pertinacy of contesting and resolution to conquer hath abused some persons innocently into a persuasion, that even the Laws themselves, though never so prudently constituted, are superstitious or impious, such persons who are otherwise pious, humble and religious, are not to be destroyed for such matters, which in themselves are not of concernment to salvation, and neither are so accidentally to such men and in such cases where they are innocently abused, and they err without purpose and design. And therefore if there be a publick disposition in some persons to dislike Laws of a certain quality, if it be fore-seen it is to be considered *in lege dicendâ*; and whatever inconvenience or particular offence is fore-

seen

ſeen, is either to be directly avoided in the Law, or elſe a compenſation in the excellency of the Law, and certain advantages, made to out-weigh their pretenſions: But *in lege jam diſtâ*, becauſe there may be a neceſſity ſome perſons ſhould have a liberty indulged them, it is neceſſary that the Governours of the Church ſhould be intruſted with a power to conſider the particular caſe, and indulge a liberty to the perſon, and grant perſonal diſpenſations. This I ſay is to be done at ſeveral times, upon particular inſtance, upon ſingular conſideration, and new emergencies. But that a whole kind of men, ſuch a kind to which all men without poſſibility of being confuted may pretend, ſhould at once in the very frame of the Law be permitted to diſobey, is to nullifie the Law, to deſtroy Diſcipline, and to hallow diſobedience; it takes away the obliging part of the Law, and makes that the thing enacted ſhall not be enjoyn'd, but tolerated only: it deſtroys unity and uniformity, which to preſerve was the very end of ſuch laws of Diſcipline: it bends the rule to the thing which is to be ruled, ſo that the Law obeys the ſubject, not the ſubject the Law: it is to make a law for particulars, not upon general reaſon and congruity, againſt the prudence and deſign of all Laws in the World, and abſolutely without the example of any Church in Chriſtendom; it prevents no ſcandal, for ſome will be ſcandalized at the authority it ſelf, ſome at the complying, and remiſſneſs of Diſcipline, and ſeveral men at matters, and upon ends contradictory: All which cannot, ſome ought not to be complied withall.

Numb. 8.

6. The ſum is this. The end of the Laws of Diſcipline are in an immediate order to the conſervation and ornament of the publick, and therefore the Laws muſt not ſo tolerate, as by conſerving perſons to deſtroy themſelves and the publick benefit, but if there be cauſe for it, they muſt be caſtated, or if there be no ſufficient cauſe, the complyings muſt be ſo as may beſt preſerve the particulars in conjunction with the publick end, which becauſe it is primarily intended, is of greateſt conſideration. But the particulars whether of caſe or perſon are to be conſidered occaſionally and emergently by the Judges, but cannot antecedently and regularly be determined by a Law.

Numb. 9.

But this ſort of Men is of ſo general pretence, that all Laws and all Judges may eaſily be abuſed by them. Thoſe Sects which are ſignified by a Name, which have a ſyſtem of Articles, a body of profeſſion, may be more clearly determined in their queſtion concerning the lawfulneſs of permitting their profeſſions and aſſemblies.

I ſhall inſtance in two, which are moſt troubleſome and moſt diſlik'd; and by an account made of theſe, we may make judgment what may be done towards others whoſe errors are not apprehended of ſo great malignity. The Men I mean are the Anabaptiſts and the Pa-piſts.

SECT.

S E C T. XVIII.

A particular conſideration of the opinions of the Anabaptiſts.

I N the Anabaptiſts I conſider only their two *Numb. 1.* capital opinions, the one againſt the baptiſm of Infants, the other againſt Magiſtracy: And becauſe they produce different judgments and various effects, all their other fancies which vary as the Moon does, may ſtand or fall in their proportion and likenefs to theſe.

And firſt I conſider their denying baptiſm to *Numb. 2.* Infants; although it be a doctrine juſtly condemned by the moſt ſorts of Chriſtians, upon great grounds of reaſon, yet poſſibly their defence may be ſo great, as to take off much, and rebate the edge of their adverſaries aſſault. It will be neither unpleaſant nor unprofitable to draw a ſhort ſcheme of plea for each party, the reſult of which poſſibly may be, that though they be deceived, yet they have ſo great excuſe on their ſide, that their error is not impudent or vincible. The baptiſm of Infants reſts wholly upon this diſcourſe.

When God made a covenant with Abraham *Numb. 3.* for himſelf and his poſterity, into which the Gentiles were reckoned by ſpiritual adoption, he did for the preſent conſign that covenant with the Sacrament of Circumciſion. The extent of which rite, was to all his Family, from the *Major domo*, to the *Proſilytus domicilio*, and to infants of eight days old. Now the very nature of this covenant being a covenant of Faith for its formality, and with all faithful people for the object; and circumciſion being a ſeal of this covenant,

nant, if ever any rite do ſupervene to conſign the ſame covenant, that rite muſt acknowledge circumciſion for its type and precedent. And this the Apoſtle tells us in expreſs doctrine. Now the nature of types, is to give ſome proportions to its ſucceſſor the Antitype, and they both being ſeals of the ſame righteouſneſs of Faith, it will not eaſily be found where theſe two ſeals have any ſuch diſtinction in their nature or purpoſes, as to appertain to perſons of differing capacity, and not equally concern all, and this argument was thought of ſo much force by ſome of thoſe excellent men which were Biſhops in the primitive Church, that a good Biſhop writ an Epiſtle to St. *Cyprian*, to know of him whether or no it were lawful to baptize Infants before the eighth day, becauſe the type of baptiſm was miniſtered in that circumciſion, he in his diſcourſe ſuppoſing that the firſt rite was a direction to the ſecond, which prevailed with him ſo far as to believe it to limit every circumſtance.

Numb. 4. And not only this type, but the acts of Chriſt which were previous to the institution of Baptiſm did prepare our underſtanding by ſuch impreſſes as were ſufficient to produce ſuch perſuaſion in us, that Chriſt intended this miniſtery for the actual advantage of Infants as well as of perſons of underſtanding. For Chriſt commanded that Children ſhould be brought unto him, he took them in his arms, he impoſed hands on them and bleſſed them, and without queſtion did by ſuch acts of favour conſign his love to them, and them to a capacity of an eternal participation of it. And poſſibly the invitation which Chriſt made to all to come to him, all them that are heavy laden, did in its proportion concern Infants as much as others, if they be guilty of Original ſin,
and

and if that sin be a burthen, and presses them to any spiritual danger or inconvenience. And it is all the reason of the World, that since the grace of Christ is as large as the prevarication of Adam, all they who are made guilty by the first Adam, should be cleansed by the second. But as they are guilty by another mans act, so they should be brought to the Font, to be purified by others, there being the same proportion of reason, that by others acts, they should be relieved who were in danger of perishing by the act of others. And therefore St. Austin argues excellently to this purpose.

Accommodat illis mater Ecclesia aliorum pedes, ut veniant; aliorum cor, ut credant; aliorum linguam, ut fateantur: ut quoniam quod egri sunt, alio peccante praegravantur, sic cum sani fiant alio confitente salventur. And Justin Martyr, ἀξιῶμαι ὅτι τῶν διὰ τὸ βαπτισμῶν ἀγαθῶν τὰ βέβαια τῇ μέλει τῶν θεοφιλοῦντων ἀντὶ τοῦ βαπτισμῶν. Serm. 10. de verb. Apost. Resp. ad Orthodoxos.

But whether they have original sin or no, yet take them *in puris naturalibus*, they cannot go to God, or attain to eternity; to which they were intended in their first being and creation, and therefore much less since their naturals are impair'd by the curse on humane nature procur'd by Adam's prevarication. And if a natural Agent cannot *in puris naturalibus* attain to Heaven, which is a supernatural end, much less when it is loaden with accidental and greivous impediments. Now then since the only way revealed to us of acquiring Heaven is by Jesus Christ; and the first inlet into Christianity, and access to him is by Baptism, as appears by the perpetual Analogy of the New Testament, either Infants are not persons capable of that end which is the perfection of humane nature, and to which the Soul of Man in its being made immortal was essen-

fentially design'd, and fo are miserable and deficient from the very end of humanity, if they die, before the use of reason; or else they must be brought to Christ by the Church doors, that is by the Font and Waters of Baptism.

Numb. 6.

And in reason, it seems more pregnant and plausible that Infants rather than men of understanding should be baptized: For since the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon Divine Institution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects independently upon man, in them that do not hinder their operation; since Infants cannot by any act of their own promote the hope of their own salvation, which men of reason and choice may, by acts of vertue and election; it is more agreeable to the goodness of God, the honour and excellency of the Sacrament, and the necessity of its institution that it should in Infants supply the want of humane acts and free obedience. Which the very thing it self seems to say it does, because its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man's part, but that its efficacy be not hindred: And then in Infants, the disposition is equal, and the necessity more; they cannot *ponere obicem*, and by the same reason cannot do others acts, which without the Sacraments do advantage us towards our hopes of heaven, and therefore have more need to be supplied by an act, and an Institution Divine and supernatural.

Numb. 7.

And this is not only necessary in respect of the condition of Infants in capacity, to do acts of grace, but also in obedience to Divine precept. For Christ made a Law whose Sanction is with an exclusive negative to them that are not baptized, [*Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven;*] If

If then Infants have a capacity of being co-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom of his Father, as Christ affirms they have, by saying [*for of such is the kingdom of heaven*] then there is a necessity that they should be brought to Baptism, there being an absolute exclusion of all persons unbaptized, and all persons not spiritual from the Kingdom of Heaven.

But indeed, it is a destruction of all the hopes *Numb. 8.* and happiness of Infants, a denying to them an exemption from the final condition of Beasts and Insectiles, or else a designing of them to a worse misery, to say that God hath not appointed some external or internal means of bringing them to an eternal happiness: Internal they have none; for Grace being an improvement and heightning the faculties of nature, in order to a heighthen'd and supernatural end, Grace hath no influence or efficacy upon their faculties, who can do no natural acts of understanding: And if there be no external means, then they are destitute of all hopes, and possibilities of salvation.

But thanks be to God, he hath provided bet *Numb. 9.* ter and told us accordingly; for he hath made a promise of the holy Ghost to Infants as well as to men: *The Promise is made to you and to your children,* said St. Peter; *The Promise of the Father, the Promise that he would send the Holy Ghost:* Now if you ask how this Promise shall be convey'd to our children, we have an express out of the same Sermon of St. Peter, *Be *Act. 2.38.39.* baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost;* So that therefore because the holy Ghost is promised, and Baptism is the means of receiving the Promise, therefore Baptism pertains to them, to whom the Promise which is the effect of Baptism does appertain. And that we

may not think this Argument is fallible, or of humane collection, obſerve that it is the Argument of the ſame Apoſtle in expreſs terms: For in the caſe of *Cornelius* and his Family, he juſtified his proceeding by this very medium, *Shall we deny Baptiſm to them who have received the gift of the holy Ghoſt as well as we?* Which Diſcourſe if it be reduced to form of Argument ſays this; They that are capable of the ſame Grace are receptive of the ſame ſign; but then (to make the Syllogiſm up with an aſſumption proper to our preſent purpoſe) Infants are capable of the ſame Grace, that is of the holy Ghoſt (for the Promiſe is made to our Children as well as to us, and St. *Paul* ſays the Children of believing Parents are holy, and therefore have the holy Ghoſt who is the Fountain of holineſs and ſanctification) therefore they are to receive the ſign and the ſeal of it, that is, the Sacrament of Baptiſm.

Numb. 10. And indeed ſince God entred a Covenant with the Jews which did alſo actually involve their Children, and gave them a ſign to eſtabliſh the Covenant, and its appendant Promiſe, either God does not ſo much love the Church as he did the Synagogue, and the mercies of the Goſpel are more reſtrain'd, than the mercies of the Law, God having made a Covenant with the Infants of *Iſrael*, and none with the Children of Chriſtian Parents; or if he hath, yet we want the comfort of its Conſignation; and unleſs our Children are to be baptized, and ſo intitled to the Promiſes of the new Covenant, as the Jewiſh Babes were by Circumciſion, this mercy which appertains to Infants is ſo ſecret and undeclared and unconfigned, that we want much of that mercy and outward Teſtimony which gave them comfort and aſſurance.

And

And in proportion to theſe Precepts and Revelations was the practice Apoſtolic: For they (to whom Chriſt gave in Precept to make Diſciples all Nations baptizing them, and knew that Nations without Children never were, and that therefore they were paſſively concerned in that commiſſion,) baptized whole Families, particularly that of *Stephanus* and divers others, in which it is more than probable there were ſome Minors, if not ſucking Babes. And this practice did deſcend upon the Church in after Ages by Tradition Apoſtolic: Of this we have ſufficient Teſtimony from *Origen*, *Pro hoc Eccleſia ab Apoſtolis traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis baptiſmum dare*: And *St. Auſtin*, *Hoc Eccleſia à majorum fide percepit*: And generally all Writers (as *Calvin* ſays) affirm the ſame thing: For *nullus eſt Scriptor tam vetuſtus, qui non ejus originem ad Apoſtolorum ſeculum pro certo referat*. From hence the Concluſion is, that Infants ought to be baptized, that it is ſimply neceſſary, that they who deny it are Hereticks, and ſuch are not to be endured becauſe they deny to Infants hopes and take away the poſſibility of their ſalvation, which is revealed to us on no other condition of which they are capable but Baptiſm. For by the inſinuation of the Type, by the action of Chriſt, by the title Infants have to Heaven, by the precept of the Goſpel, by the Energy of the Promise, by the reaſonableneſs of the thing, by the infinite neceſſity on the infants part, by the practice Apoſtolic, by their Tradition, and the univerſal practice of the Church; by all theſe God and good people proclaim the lawfulness, the conveniency, and the neceſſity of Infants Baptiſm.

Numb. 11.

In Rom. 6, tom. 2. pag.

543.

Serm. 10. de verb. Apoſt. c. 2.

4. Inſtit. cap. 16. §. 8.

Numb. 12. To all this, the *Anabaptiſt* gives a ſoft and gentle Answer, that it is a goodly harangue which upon ſtrict examination will come to nothing, that it pretends fairly and ſignifies little. That ſome of theſe Allegations are falſe, ſome impertinent, and all the reſt inſufficient.

Numb. 13. For the Argument from Circumciſion is invalid upon infinite conſiderations; Figures and Types prove nothing, unleſs a Commandment go along with them, or ſome expreſs to ſignify ſuch to be their purpoſe: For the Deluge of Waters and the Ark of *Noah* were a figure of Baptiſm ſaid *Peter*; and if therefore the circumſtances of one ſhould be drawn to the other, we ſhould make Baptiſm a prodigy rather than a Rite: The Paſchal Lamb was a Type of the Eucharift which ſucceeds the other as Baptiſm does to Circumciſion; but becauſe there was in the manducation of the Paſchal Lamb, no preſcription of Sacramental drink, ſhall we thence conclude that the Eucharift is to be miniſtered but in one kind? And even in the very inſtance of this Argument, ſuppoſing a correſpondence of analogy between Circumciſion and Baptiſm, yet there is no correſpondence of identity: For although it were granted that both of them did conſign the Covenant of Faith, yet there is nothing in the circumſtance of childrens being circumciſed that ſo concerns that Myſtery, but that it might very well be given to Children, and yet Baptiſm only to men of reaſon; becauſe Circumciſion left a Character in the fleſh, which being imprinted upon Infants did its work to them when they came to age; and ſuch a Character was neceſſary becauſe there was no word added to the ſign; but Baptiſm imprints nothing that remains on the body, and if it leave

Character at all it is upon the soul, to which also the word is added which is as much a part of the Sacrament as the sign it self is; for both which reasons, it is requisite that the persons baptized should be capable of reason, that they may be capable both of the word of the Sacrament, and the impress made upon the Spirit: Since therefore the reason of this parity does wholly fail, there is nothing left to infer a necessity of complying in this circumstance of age any more than in the other annexes of the Type: And the case is clear in the Bishops Question to *Cyprian*, for why shall not Infants be baptized just upon the eighth day as well as circumcised? If the correspondence of the Rites be an Argument to infer one circumstance which is impertinent and accidental to the mysteriousness of the Rite, why shall it not infer all? And then also Females must not be baptized, because they were not circumcised: But it were more proper if we would understand it right, to prosecute the analogy from the Type to the Anti-type by way of letter and spirit, and signification, and as Circumcision figures Baptism, so also the adjuncts of the Circumcision shall signifie something, spiritual, in the adherencies of Baptism: And therefore as Infants were circumcised, so spiritual Infants shall be baptized, which is spiritual Circumcision; for therefore Babes had the ministry of the Type, to signifie that we must when we give our names to Christ become *ἡλικιοὶ ἐν αἰσιν* children in malice. [*for unless you become like one of these little ones, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*] said our blessed Saviour, and then the Type is made compleat. And this seems to have been the sense of the Primitive Church; for in the Age next to the

L. 3. Epist. 8.
ad Fidum.

Apostles they gave to all baptized persons milk and honey to represent to them their duty, that though in age and understanding they were men, yet they were Babes in Christ, and children in malice. But to infer the sense of the Pædo-baptists is so weak a manner of arguing that *Austin* whose device it was (and men use to be in love with their own fancies) at the most pretended it but as probable and a meer conjecture.

Numb. 14. And as ill success will they have with the other Arguments as with this; For from the action of Christs blessing Infants to infer that they are to be baptized, proves nothing so much as that there is great want of better Arguments; The Conclusion would be with more probability derived thus: Christ blessed children and so dismissed them, but baptized them not, therefore Infants are not to be baptized; But let this be as weak as its enemy, yet that Christ did not baptize them, is an Argument sufficient that Christ hath other ways of bringing them to Heaven than by Baptism, he passed his act of grace upon them by benediction and imposition of hands.

Numb. 15. And therefore, although neither Infants nor any man in *puris naturalibus* can attain to a supernatural end without the addition of some instrument or means of Gods appointing ordinarily and regularly, yet where God hath not appointed a Rule nor an Order, as in the case of Infants we contend he hath not, the Argument is invalid. And as we are sure that God hath not commanded Infants to be baptized; so we are sure God will do them no injustice, nor damn them for what they cannot help.

And therefore, let them be preſſed with all *Numb. 16* the inconveniences that are conſequent to Original ſin, yet either it will not be laid to the charge of Infants, ſo as to be ſufficient to condemn them; or if it could, yet the mercy and abſolute goodneſs of God will ſecure them, if he takes them away before they can glorifie him with a free obedience; *Quid ergo feſtinat innocens ætas ad remiſſionem peccatorum*, was the Queſtion of *Tertullian*, (*lib. de bapt.*) he knew no ſuch danger from their Original guilt as to drive them to a laver of which in that Age of innocence they had no need, as he conceived. And therefore, there is no neceſſity of flying to the help of others, for tongue, and heart, and faith, and prediſpoſitions to baptiſm; for what need all this ſtir? as Infants without their own conſent, without any act of their own, and without any exteriour ſolemnity contracted the guilt of *Adam's* ſin, and ſo are lyable to all the puniſhment which can with juſtice deſcend upon his poſterity who are perſonally innocent; ſo Infants ſhall be reſtored without any ſolemnity or act of their own, or of any other men for them, by the ſecond *Adam*, by the redemption of *Jeſus Chriſt*, by his righteouſneſs and mercies applyed either immediately, or how or when he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. And ſo *St. Auſtin's* Argument will come to nothing without any need of Godfathers, or the faith of any body elſe. And it is too narrow a conception of God Almighty, becauſe he hath tyed us to the obſervation of the Ceremonies of his own institution, that therefore he hath tyed himſelf to it. Many thouſand ways there are by which God can bring any reaſonable ſoul to himſelf: But nothing is more unreaſonable, than becauſe he hath tyed

all men of years and diſcretion to this way, therefore we of our own heads ſhall carry Infants to him that way without his direction: The conceit is poor and low, and the action conſequent to it is too bold and ventrous, *mysterium meum mihi & filiis domus mee*: Let him do what he pleaſe to Infants, we muſt not.

Numb. 17. Only this is certain, that God hath as great care of Infants as of others, and becauſe they have no capacity of doing ſuch acts as may be in order to acquiring ſalvation, God will by his own immediate mercy bring them thither where he hath intended them; but to ſay that therefore he will do it by an external act and miniſtery, and that confin'd to a particular, *viz.* This Rite and no other, is no good Argument, unleſs God could not do it without ſuch means, or that he had ſaid he would not: And why cannot God as well do his mercies to Infants now immediately, as he did before the institution either of Circumciſion or Baptiſm?

Numb. 18. However, there is no danger that Infants ſhould periſh for want of this external Miniſtery, much leſs for prevaricating Chriſts precept of *Niſi quis renatus fuerit, &c.* For firſt, the Water and the Spirit in this place ſignifie the ſame thing; and by Water is meant the effect of the Spirit, cleaning and purifying the Soul, as appears in its parallel place of Chriſt baptizing with the Spirit and with Fire. For although this was literally fulfilled in Pentecoſt, yet morally there is more in it, for it is the ſign of the effect of the holy Ghoſt, and his productions upon the Soul; and it was an excellency of our bleſſed Saviour's office, that he baptizes *all* that come to him with the holy Ghoſt and with fire; for ſo St. John preferring Chriſts miſſion and

and office before his own, tells the Jews, not Chriſt's Diſciples, that Chriſt ſhall baptize them with Fire and the holy Spirit, that is, *all that come to him*, as *John the Baptiſt* did with water, for ſo lies the Antitheliſis: And you may as well conclude that Infants muſt alſo paſs through the fire as through the water. And that we may not think this a trick to elude the preſſure of this place, *Peter* ſays the ſame thing; for when he had ſaid that Baptiſm ſaves us, he adds by way of explication [*not the waſhing of the fleſh, but the confidence of a good Conſcience towards God*] plainly ſaying that it is not water, or the purifying of the body, but the cleaning of the Spirit, that does that which is ſuppoſed to be the effect of Baptiſm; and if our Saviour's excluſive negative be expounded by analogy to this of *Peter*, as certainly the other parallel inſtance muſt, and this may, then it will be ſo far from proving the neceſſity of Infants Baptiſm, that it can conclude for no man that he is oblig'd to the Rite; and the doctrine of the Baptiſm is only to derive from the very words of Inſtitution, and not be forced from words which were ſpoken before it was Ordain'd. But to let paſs this advantage, and to ſuppoſe it meant of external Baptiſm, yet this no more infers a neceſſity of Infant's Baptiſm, than the other words of Chriſt infer a neceſſity to give them the holy Communion, *Niſi comederitis carnem filii hominis, & biberitis ſanguinem, non introibitis in regnum cœlorum*; and yet we do not think theſe words ſufficient Argument to communicate them; if men therefore will do us Juſtice, either let them give both Sacraments to Infants, as ſome Ages of the Church did, or neither. For the wit of man is not able to ſhew
a diſpa-

a disparity in the Sanction, or in the Energy of its expreſſion. And therefore they were honeſt that underſtood the obligation to be parallel, and performed it accordingly, and yet becauſe we ſay they were deceived in one inſtance, and yet the obligation (all the world cannot reaſonably ſay but) is the ſame; they are as honeſt and as reaſonable that do neither. And ſince the Ancient Church did with an equal opinion of neceſſity give them the Communion, and yet men now adays do not, why ſhall men be more burthened with a prejudice and a name of obloquy, for not giving the Infants one Sacrament more than they are diſliked for not affording them the other. If *Anabaptiſt* ſhall be a name of diſgrace, why ſhall not ſome other name be invented for them that deny to communicate Infants, which ſhall be equally diſgraceful, or elſe both the opinions ſignified by ſuch names, be accounted no diſparagement, but receive their eſtimate according to their truth;

Numb. 19. Of which truth ſince we are now taking account from pretences of Scripture, it is conſiderable that the diſcourſe of St. *Peter* which is pretended for the intitling Infants to the Promise of the holy Ghoſt, and by conſequence to Baptiſm, which is ſuppoſed to be its inſtrument and conveyance, is wholly a fancy, and hath in it nothing of certainty or demonſtration, and not much probability. For beſides that the thing it ſelf is unreaſonable, and the holy Ghoſt works by the heightning and improving our natural faculties, and therefore is a promiſe that ſo concerns them as they are reaſonable creatures, and may have a title to it, in proportion to their nature, but no poſſeſſion or reception of it, till their faculties come into act; beſides this, I ſay, the
the

the words mentioned in *St. Peter's* Sermon (which are the only record of the promise) are interpreted upon a weak mistake: The promise belongs to you and to your children, therefore Infants are actually receptive of it in that capacity. That's the Argument; but the reason of it is not yet discovered, nor ever will, for [*to you and your children*] is to you and your posterity, to you and your children when they are of the same capacity, in which you are effectually receptive of the promise: But he that when ever the word [*children*] is used in Scripture shall by [*children*] understand Infants, must needs believe that in all *Israel* there were no men, but all were infants; and if that had been true, it had been the greater wonder they should overcome the *Anakims* and beat the King of *Moab*, and march so far, and discourse so well, for they were all called the children of *Israel*.

And for the Allegation of *St. Paul* that Infants are holy, if their Parents be faithful, it signifies nothing, but that they are holy by designation, just as *Jeremy* and *John Baptist* were sanctified in their Mothers womb, that is they were appointed and design'd for holy Ministeries; but had not received the Promise of the Father the gift of the holy Ghost, for all that sanctification; and just so the Children of Christian Parents are sanctified, that is design'd to the service of *Jesus Christ*, and the future participation of the Promises. Numb. 20.

And as the Promise appertains not (for ought appears) to Infants in that capacity and consistence, but only by the title of their being reasonable creatures, and when they come to that act of which by nature they have the faculty; so if it did, yet Baptism is not the means of conveying Numb. 21.

veying the holy Ghoſt. For that which *Peter* ſays, *be baptized and ye ſhall receive the holy Ghoſt*, ſignifies no more than this: Firſt be baptized and then by impoſition of the Apoſtles hands (which was another myſtery and rite,) ye ſhall receive the Promise of the Father: And this is nothing but an Inſinuation of the rite of confirmation, as is to this ſenſe expounded by divers Ancient Authors, and in ordinary miniſtery the effect of it is not beſtowed upon any unbaptized perſons; for it is in order next after Baptiſm; and upon this ground *Peter's* Argument in the caſe of *Cornelius* was concluding enough *à majori ad minus*: Thus the holy Ghoſt was beſtowed upon him and his Family, which gift by ordinary miniſtry was conſequent to Baptiſm, (not as the effect is to the cauſe or to the proper inſtrument, but as a conſequent is to an antecedent in a chain of cauſes accidentally and by poſitive institution depending upon each other) God by that miracle did give teſtimony, that the perſons of the men were in great diſpoſitions towards Heaven, and therefore were to be admitted to thoſe Rites, which are the ordinary inlets into the Kingdom of Heaven. But then from hence to argue that wherever there is a capacity of receiving the ſame grace, there alſo the ſame ſign is to be miniſtered, and from hence to infer Pædo-baptiſm, is an Argument very fallacious upon ſeveral grounds. Firſt, becauſe Baptiſm is not the ſign of the holy Ghoſt, but by another myſtery it was conveyed ordinarily, and extraordinarily, it was conveyed independently from any myſtery, and ſo the Argument goes upon a wrong ſuppoſition. Secondly, if the ſuppoſition were true, the propoſition built upon it is falſe; for they that are capable of
the

the ſame grace, are not always capable of the ſame ſign; for women under the Law of *Moses*, although they were capable of the righteouſneſs of Faith, yet they were not capable of the ſign of Circumciſion: For God does not always convey his graces in the ſame manner, but to ſome mediately, to others immediately; and there is no better inſtance in the world of it, than the gift of the holy Ghoſt (which is the thing now inſtanc'd in this conteſtation) for it is certain in Scripture, that it was ordinarily given by impoſition of hands, and that after Baptiſm; (And when this came into an ordinary miniſtery, it was called by the ancient Church Chriſm or Confirmation) but yet it was given ſometimes without impoſition of hands, as at Pentecoſt and to the Family of *Cornelius*; ſometimes before Baptiſm, ſometimes after, ſometimes in conjunction with it.

And after all this, leaſt theſe Arguments *Numb. 22.* ſhould not aſcertain their Cauſe, they fall on complaining againſt God, and will not be content with God, unleſs they may baptize their Children, but take exceptions that God did more for the Children of the Jews. But why ſo? Becauſe God made a Covenant with their Children actually as Infants and conſign'd it by Circumciſion: Well; ſo he did with our children too in their proportion. He made a Covenant of ſpiritual Promiſes on his part, and ſpiritual and real ſervices on ours; and this pertains to Children when they are capable, but made with them as ſoon as they are alive, and yet not ſo as with the Jews Babes; for as their rite conſign'd them actually, ſo it was a National and temporal bleſſing and Covenant, as a ſeparation of them from the portion of the Nations, a
marking

marking them for a peculiar people, (and therefore while they were in the Wilderneſs and ſeparate from the commixture of all people, they were not at all circumciſed) but as that rite did ſeal the righteouſneſs of Faith, ſo by vertue of its adherency, and remanency in their fleſh, it did that work when the Children came to age. But in Chriſtian Infants the caſe is otherwiſe; for the new Covenant being eſtabliſh'd upon better Promiſes, is not only to better purpoſes, but alſo in diſtinct manner to be underſtood; when their ſpirits are as receptive of a ſpiritual act or impreſs as the bodies of Jewiſh Children were of the ſign of Circumciſion, then it is to be conſign'd: But this buſineſs is quickly at an end, by ſaying that God hath done no leſs for ours, than for their Children; for he will do the mercies of a Father and Creator to them; and he did no more to the other; but he hath done more to ours; for he hath made a Covenant with them and built it upon Promiſes of the greateſt concernment; he did not ſo to them: But then for the other part which is the main of the Argument, that unleſs this mercy be conſign'd by Baptiſm, as good not at all in reſpect of us, becauſe we want the comfort of it; this is the greateſt vanity in the world: For when God hath made a promiſe pertaining alſo to our Children (for ſo our Adverſaries contend, and we alſo acknowledge in its true ſenſe) ſhall not this Promiſe, this word of God be of ſufficient truth, certainty, and efficacy to cauſe comfort, unleſs we tempt God and require a ſign of him? May not Chriſt ſay to theſe men as ſometime to the Jews, *a wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, but no ſign ſhall be given unto it?* But the truth on't is, this

Argument

Argument is nothing but a direct quarelling with God Almighty.

Now ſince there is no ſtrength in the Doctrinal part, the practice and precedents Apoſtolic and Eccleſiaſtical, will be of leſs concernment, if they were true as is pretended, becauſe actions Apoſtolic are not always Rules for ever; it might be fit for them to do it *pro loco & tempore*, as divers others of their Inſtitutions, but yet no engagement paſt thence upon following Ages; for it might be convenient at that time, in the new ſpring of Chriſtianity, and till they had engag'd a conſiderable party, by that means to make them parties againſt the Gentiles Superſtition, and by way of pre-occupation to aſcertain them to their own ſect when they came to be men; or for ſome other reaſon not tranſmitted to us, becauſe the Queſtion of fact it ſelf is not ſufficiently determin'd. For the inſinuation of that precept of baptizing *all Nations*, of which Children certainly are a part, does as little advantage as any of the reſt, becauſe other parallel expreſſions of Scripture do determine and expound themſelves to a ſence that includes not all perſons abſolutely, but of a capable condition, as *adore eum omnes gentes, & psallite Deo omnes nationes terra*, and divers more.

As for the conjecture concerning the Family of *Stephanus*, at the beſt it is but a conjecture, and beſides that it is not prov'd that there were Children in the Family; yet if that were granted, it follows not that they were baptized, becauſe by [*whole Families*] in Scripture is meant all perſons of reaſon and age within the Family; for it is ſaid, of the Ruler at *Capernaum*, *that he believed and all his houſe*: Now you may

Numb. 23.

Numb. 24.

Joh. 4.

may alſo ſuppoſe that in his houſe were little Babes, that is likely enough, and you may ſuppoſe that they did believe too before they could underſtand, but that's not ſo likely? and then the Argument from baptizing of *Stephen's* houſhold may be allowed juſt as probable: But this is unman-like to build upon ſuch flight aery conjectures.

Numb. 25.

But Tradition by all means muſt ſupply the place of Scripture, and there is pretended a Tradition Apoſtolic, that Infants were baptized: But at this we are not much moved; For we who rely upon the written Word of God as ſufficient to eſtabliſh all true Religion, do not value the Allegation of Traditions: And however the world goes, none of the Reformed Churches can pretend this Argument againſt this opinion, becauſe they who reject Tradition when 'tis againſt them, muſt not pretend it at all for them: But if we ſhould allow the Topic to be good, yet how will it be verified? for ſo far as it can yet appear, it relies wholly upon the Teſtimony of *Origen*, for from him *Auſtin* had it. Now a Tradition Apoſtolic if it be not conſign'd with a fuller Teſtimony than of one perſon whom all after-Ages have condemn'd of many errors, will obtain ſo little reputation amongſt thoſe who know that things have upon greater Authority pretended to derive from the Apoſtles, and yet falſly, that it will be a great Argument that he is credulous and weak, that ſhall be determin'd by ſo weak probation in matters of ſo great concernment. And the truth of the buſineſs is, as there was no command of Scripture to oblige Children to the ſuſception of it, ſo the neceſſity of Pædobaptiſm was not determin'd in the Church till

in the eighth Age after Chriſt, but in the year 418 in the *Milevian* Council, a Provincial of *Africa*, there was a Canon made for Pædo-baptiſm; never till then! I grant it was practiſed in *Africa* before that time, and they or ſome of them thought well of it, and though that be no Argument for us to think ſo, yet none of them did ever before, pretend it to be neceſſary, none to have been a precept of the Goſpel. St. *Auſtin* was the firſt that ever preach'd it to be abſolutely neceſſary, and it was in his heat and anger againſt *Pelagius* who had warm'd and chafed him ſo in that Queſtion, that it made him innovate in other doctrines poſſibly of more concernment than this. And that although this was practiſed anciently in *Africa*, yet that it was without an opinion of neceſſity, and not often there, nor at all in other places, we have the Teſtimony of a learned Pædo-baptiſt, *Ludovicus Vives*, who in his Annotations upon St. *Auſtin*, *De Civit. Dei*, l. 1. c. 27. affirms, *Neminem niſi adultum antiquitus ſolere baptizari.*

But beſides that the Tradition cannot be proved to be Apoſtolic; we have very good evidence from Antiquity, that it was the opinion of the Primitive Church, that Infants ought not to be baptiz'd; and this is clear in the ſixth Canon of the Council of *Neocæſarea*, The words are theſe
 καὶ κυοφορέσης ὅπῃ δὲ φωπίζεαι ὅποτε βέλεῖ. ἐδὲν γὰρ κοινω-
 νεῖ ἢ πικτεῖσα τῷ πεπομῆνῳ. διὰ τὸ ἐχέειν ἰδίαν τὴν προαίρεσιν
 ἢ ἐν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ δείκνυσθαι: The ſenſe is this, A Wo-
 man with child may be baptized when ſhe pleaſe;
 For her Baptiſm concerns not the child. The
 reaſon of the connexion of the parts of that Ca-
 non is in the following words, becauſe every one
 in that Confeſſion is to give a demonſtration of
 his own choice and election: Meaning plainly,
 Y that

that if the Baptiſm of the Mother did alſo paſs upon the Child, it were not fit for a pregnant Woman to receive Baptiſm, Becauſe in that Sacrament there being a Confeſſion of Faith, which Confeſſion ſuppoſes underſtanding, and free choice, it is not reaſonable the Child ſhould be conſign'd with ſuch a myſtery, ſince it cannot do any act of choice or underſtanding: The Canon ſpeaks reaſon, and it intimates a practice which was abſolutely univerſal in the Church, of interrogating the Catechumens concerning the Articles of Creed: Which is one Argument that either they did not admit Infants to Baptiſm, or that they did prevaricate egregiouſly in aſking Queſtions of them, who themſelves knew were not capable of giving anſwer.

Numb. 27.

Quid ni neceſſe eſt (ſic legit Franc. Junius in notis ad Tertul.) ſponſores etiam periculo ingeri qui & ipſi per mortalitatem deſtituere promiſſiones ſuas poſſint, & proventum falſe indolis falli? Tertul. lib. de baptiſ. cap. 18.

And to ſupply their incapacity by the Anſwer of a God-Father, is but the ſame unreaſonableneſs acted with a worſe circumſtance: And there is no ſenſible account can be given of it; for that which ſome imperfectly murmur concerning ſtipulations civil performed by Tutors in the name of their Pupils, is an abſolute vanity: For what if by poſitive Conſtitution of the Romans ſuch ſolemnities of Law are required in all ſtipulations, and by indulgence are permitted in the caſe of a notable benefit accruing to Minors, muſt God be tyed, and Chriſtian Religion tranſact her myſteries by proportion and compliance with the Law of the Romans? I know God might if he would have appointed God-Fathers to give Anſwer in behalf of the Children, and to be fidejuffors for them; but we cannot find any Authority or ground that he hath, and if he had, then it is to be ſuppoſed he would have given them Commiſſion to have tranſacted the ſolemnity with better circumſtances, and given

Anſwers

Answers with more truth. For the Queſtion is asked of believing in the preſent. And if the God-Fathers answer in the name of the Child, [*I do believe*] it is notorious they ſpeak falſe and ridiculouslly; For the Infant is not capable of believing, and if he were, he were alſo capable of diſſenting, and how then do they know his mind? And therefore *Tertullian* gives advice that the Baptiſm of Infants ſhould be deferred till they could give an account of their Faith, and the ſame alſo is the Counſel of * *Gregory* Biſhop of *Nazianzum*, although he allows them to haſten it in caſe of neceſſity; for though his reaſon taught him what was fit; yet he was overborn with the practice and opinion of his Age, which began to bear too violently upon him, and yet in another place he makes mention of ſome to whom Baptiſm was not adminiſtered *ὅτι νηπιότατα*, by reaſon of Infancy: To which if we add that the Parents of *St. Auſtin*, *St. Hierom*, and *St. Ambroſe* although they were Chriſtian, yet did not baptize their Children before they were 30 years of age, it will be very conſiderable in the example, and of great efficacy for deſtroying the ſuppoſed neceſſity or derivation from the Apoſtles.

But however, it is againſt the perpetual Analogy of Chriſt's Doctrine to baptize Infants: For beſides that Chriſt never gave any precept to baptize them, nor ever himſelf nor his Apoſtles (that appears) did baptize any of them; All that either he or his Apoſtles ſaid concerning it, requires ſuch previous diſpoſitions to Baptiſm of which Infants are not capable, and theſe are Faith and Repentance: And not to inſtance in thoſe innumerable places that require Faith before this Sacrament, there needs no more but

Lib. de baptiſm. prope finem, cap. 18. itaque propter aetatem, etiam aetate, cunctatio baptiſmi utilior eſt, praecipue tamen circa parvulos Fiant Chriſtianicum Chriſtum noſſe poterint.

Orat. 40. quaest. in S. Baptiſma.

Numb. 28.

Mar. 16.

this one ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned*; plainly thus, Faith and Baptiſm in conjunction will bring a man to Heaven; but if he have not Faith, Baptiſm ſhall do him no good. So that if Baptiſm be neceſſary then, ſo is Faith, and much more; for want of Faith damns abſolutely; it is not ſaid ſo of the want of Baptiſm. Now if this decretory ſentence be to be underſtood of perſons of age, and if Children by ſuch an Answer (which indeed is reaſonable enough) be excuſed from the neceſſity of Faith, the want of which regularly does damn, then it is ſottiſh to ſay the ſame incapacity of reaſon and Faith ſhall not excuſe from the actual ſuſception of Baptiſm, which is leſs neceſſary, and to which Faith and many other acts are neceſſary prediſpoſitions when it is reaſonably and humanly received. The Concluſion is, that Baptiſm is alſo to be deferr'd till the time of Faith: And whether Infants have Faith or no, is a Queſtion to be diſputed by perſons that care not how much they ſay, nor how little they prove.

Numb. 29. 1. Perſonal and actual Faith they have none; for they have no acts of underſtanding; and beſides how can any man know that they have, ſince he never ſaw any ſign of it, neither was he told ſo by any one that could tell? 2. Some ſay they have imputative Faith; but then ſo let the Sacrament be too, that is, if they have the Parents Faith or the Churches, then ſo let Baptiſm be imputed alſo by derivation from them, that as in their Mothers womb, and while they hang on their breſts, they live upon their Mothers nourishment, ſo they may upon the Baptiſm of their Parents or their Mother the Church. For ſince

Faith

Faith is neceſſary to the ſuſception of Baptiſm and they themſelves confeſs it by ſtriving to find out new kinds of Faith to dawb the matter up) ſuch as the Faith is, ſuch muſt be the Sacrament: For there is no proportion between an actual Sacrament and an imputative Faith, this being in immediate and neceſſary order to that: And whatſoever can be ſaid to take off from the neceſſity of actual Faith, all that and much more may be ſaid to excuſe from the actual ſuſception of Baptiſm. 3. The firſt of theſe devices was that of *Luther* and his Scholars, the ſecond of *Calvin* and his; and yet there is a third device which the Church of *Rome* teaches, and that is, that Infants have habitual Faith: But who told them ſo? how can they prove it? what Revelation, or reaſon teaches any ſuch thing? Are they by this habit ſo much as diſpoſed to an actual belief without a new Maſter? Can an Infant ſent into a *Mahumetan* Province be more confident for Chriſtianity when he comes to be a Man, than if he had not been baptized? Are there any acts precedent, concomitant or conſequent to this pretended habit? This ſtrange invention is abſolutely without art, without Scripture, Reaſon or Authority: But the men are to be excuſed unleſs there were a better: But for all theſe ſtratagems, the Argument now alledged againſt the Baptiſm of Infants is demonſtrative and unanſwerable.

To which alſo this conſideration may be added, *Numb. 30.* that if Baptiſm be neceſſary to the ſalvation of Infants, upon whom is the impoſition laid? To whom is the command given? to the Parents or to the Children? not to the Children, for they are not capable of a Law; nor to the Parents, for then God hath put the ſalvation of

innocent Babes into the power of others; and Infants may be damn'd for their Fathers carelessness or malice. It follows that it is not necessary at all to be done to them, to whom it cannot be prescrib'd as a Law, and in whose behalf it cannot be reasonably intrusted to others with the appendant necessity; and if it be not necessary, it is certain it is not reasonable, and most certain it is no where in terms prescribed, and therefore it is to be presumed, that it ought to be understood and administred according as other precepts are with reference to the capacity of the subject, and the reasonableness of the thing.

Numb. 1. For I consider, that the baptizing of Infants does rush us upon such inconveniences which in other Questions we avoid like Rocks, which will appear if we Discourse thus.

Either Baptism produces spiritual effects, or it produces them not: If it produces not any, why is such contention about it, what are we the nearer heaven if we are baptized? and if it be neglected, what are we the farther off? But if (as without all peradventure all the *Pado-baptists* will say) Baptism does do a work upon the Soul, producing spiritual benefits and advantages, these advantages are produc'd by the external work of the Sacrament alone, or by that as it is help'd by the co-operation and predispositions of the *suscipient*.

If by the external work of the Sacrament alone, how does this differ from the *opus operatum* of the Papists, save that it is worse? For they say the Sacrament does not produce its effect but in a *suscipient* disposed by all requisites and due preparatives of Piety, Faith, and Repentance; though in a subject so disposed, they say the Sacrament

rament by its own vertue does it; but this opinion ſays it does it of it ſelf without the help, or ſo much as the coexiſtence of any condition but the meer reception.

But if the Sacrament does not do its work alone, but *per modum recipientis* according to the prediſpoſitions of the ſuſcipient, then becauſe Infants can neither hinder it, nor do any thing to further it, it does them no benefit at all. And if any Man runs for ſuccour to that exploded *νενοσηλον*, that Infants have Faith, or any other inſpir'd habit of I know not what or how, we deſire no more advantage in the World, than that they are conſtrained to an answer without Revelation, againſt reaſon, common ſenſe, and all the experience in the World.

The ſum of the Argument in ſhort, is this, though under another repreſentment.

Either Baptiſm is a meer *Ceremony*, or it implies a *Duty* on our part. If it be a Ceremony only, how does it ſanctifie us, or *make the comers thereunto perfect*? If it implies a *Duty* on our part, how then can Children receive it, who cannot do duty at all?

And indeed, this way of Miniſtration makes Baptiſm to be wholly an outward duty, a work of the Law, a carnal Ordinance, it makes us adhere to the letter, without regard of the Spirit, to be ſatiſfied with ſhadows, to return to bondage, to relinquish the myſteriousneſs, the ſubſtance and Spirituality of the Goſpel. Which Argument is of ſo much the more conſideration, becauſe under the Spiritual Covenant, or the Goſpel of Grace, if *the myſtery* goes not before the *Symbol* (which it does when the Symbols are Seals and Conſignations of the Grace, as it is ſaid the Sacraments are) yet it always accom-

panies it, but never follows in order of time: And this is clear in the perpetual Analogy of Holy Scripture.

For Baptism is never propounded, mentioned or enjoyn'd as a means of remission of sins, or of eternal life, but something of duty, choice and sanctity is joyn'd with it, in order to production of the end so mentioned, *Know ye not that as many as are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into his death?* There is the mystery and the Symbol together, and declared to be perpetually united, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν. All of us who were baptized into one, were baptized into the other. Not only into the Name of Christ, but into his Death also: But the meaning of this as it is explained in the following words of St. Paul, makes much for our purpose: For to be baptized into his Death, signifies *to be buried with him in Baptism, that as Christ rose from the dead, we also should walk in newness of life:* That's the full mystery of Baptism; For being baptized into his Death, or which is all one in the next words, ἐν ὁμοιότητι τῆς θανάτου αὐτοῦ *into the likeness of his death, cannot go alone; if we be so planted into Christ, we shall be partakers of his Resurrection, and that is not here instanced in precise reward, but in exact Duty, for all this is nothing but crucifixion of the old man, a destroying the body of sin, that we no longer serve sin.*

This indeed is truly to be baptized both in the Symbol and the Mystery: Whatsoever is less than this, is but the Symbol only, a meer Ceremony, an *opus operatum*, a dead letter, an empty shadow, an instrument without an agent to manage, or force to actuate it.

Plain.

Plainer yet: *Whoſoever are baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt, have put on the new man: But to put on this new man, is to be formed in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth: This whole Argument is the very words of St. Paul: The Major propoſition is dogmatically determin'd, Gal. 3. 27. The Minor in Ephes. 4. 24. The Conclusion then is obvious, that they who are not formed new in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth, they who remaining in the preſent incapacities cannot walk in newneſs of life, they have not been baptized into Chriſt, and then they have but one member of the diſtinction, uſed by St. Peter, they have that Baptiſm which is a putting away the filth of the fleſh; but they have not that Baptiſm which is the answer of a good conſcience towards God, which is the only Baptiſm that ſaves us: And this is the caſe of Children; And then the caſe is thus.*

As Infants by the force of nature cannot put themſelves into a ſupernatural condition, (and therefore ſay the *Pædo-baptiſts*, they need Baptiſm to put them into it:) ſo if they be baptized before the uſe of reaſon, before the *works of the Spirit*, before the operations of Grace, before they can throw off *the works of darkneſs*, and live in *righteouſneſs and newneſs of life*, they are never the nearer: From the pains of Hell they ſhall be ſaved by the mercies of God and their own innocence, though they die *in puris naturalibus*, and Baptiſm will carry them no further. For that *Baptiſm that ſaves us*, is not the only *washing with water*, of which only, Children are capable, but the *answer of a good conſcience towards God*, of which they are not capable till the uſe of reaſon, till they know to chuſe the good and reſuſe the evil.

And

Vide Eraſ-
mum in præ-
fat. ad Anno-
tat. in Matth.

And from thence I conſider anew, That all vows made by perſons under others Names, ſtipulations made by *Minors* are not valid till they by a ſupervening act after they are of ſufficient age do ratifie them. Why then may not Infants as well make the vow *de novo*, as *de novo* ratifie that which was made for them *ab antiquo* when they come to years of choice? If the *Infant* vow be invalid till the *Manly* confirmation, why were it not as good they ſtaid to make it till that time, before which if they do make it, it is to no purpoſe? This would be conſidered.

Numb. 32.

And in Concluſion, our way is the ſurer way, for not to baptize Children till they can give an account of their Faith is the moſt proportionable to an act of reaſon and humanity, and it can have no danger in it: For to ſay that Infants may be damn'd for want of Baptiſm, (a thing which is not in their power to acquire, they being perſons not yet capable of a Law) is to affirm that of God which we dare not ſay of any wiſe and good man. Certainly it is much derogatory to Gods Juſtice and a plain defiance to the infinite reputation of his goodneſs.

Numb. 33.

And therefore, who ever will pertinaciouſly perſiſt in this opinion of the Pædo-baptiſts and praſtiſe it accordingly, they pollute the blood of the everlaſting Teſtament, they diſhonour and make a pageantry of the Sacrament, they ineffectually repreſent a ſepulture into the death of Chriſt, and pleaſe themſelves in a ſign without effect, making Baptiſm like the fig-tree in the Goſpel, full of leaves but no fruit; and they invoke the holy Ghoſt in vain, doing as if one ſhould call upon him to illuminate a ſtone, or a tree.

Thus

Thus far the *Anabaptiſts* may argue, and men Numb. 34. have Diſputed againſt them with ſo much weakneſs and confidence, that they have been encouraged in their Error * more by the accidental advantages we have given them by our weak arguments, than by any truth of their cauſe, or excellency of their wit. But the uſe I make of it as to our preſent Queſtion is this: That ſince there is no direct impiety in the opinion, nor any that is apparently conſequent to it, and they with ſo much probability do or may pretend to true perſuaſion, they are with all means, *ἐκ τῶν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν δόγμασι τῶν ἰχθῶν ἐχούτες, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις συσφοῖς πάντων θηρόντες, Chriſtian, fair, and humane, to be redargued, as Nazianzen or inſtructed, but if they cannot be perſuaded obſerves of the caſe of the Church in his time. they muſt be left to God, who knows every degree of every mans underſtanding, all his weakneſſes and ſtrengths, what impreſs each Argument makes upon his Spirit, and how unrefiſtible every reaſon is, and he alone judges his innocency and ſincerity; and for that Queſtion, I think there is ſo much to be pretended againſt that, which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than evidence on our ſide, and therefore we may be confident as for our own particulars, but not too forward peremptorily to preſcribe to others, much leſs damn, or to kill, or to perſecute them that only in this particular diſagree.

SECT.

S E C T. XIX.

*That there may be no Toleration of Doctrines
inconfiſtent with piety or the publick good.*

Numb. 1.

BUT then for their capital Opinion, with all its branches, that it is not lawful for Princes to put Malefactors to death, nor to take up defensive Arms, nor to miniſter an Oath, nor to contend in judgment, it is not to be diſputed with ſuch liberty as the former: For although it be part of that Doctrine which *Clemens Alexandrinus* ſays was delivered *per ſecretam traditionem Apoſtolorum, Non licere Chriſtianis contendere in Iudicio, nec coràm gentibus, nec coràm ſanctis, & perfectum non debere jurare*; and the other part ſeems to be warranted by the eleventh Canon of the *Nicene Council*, which enjoyns penance to them that take Arms after their conversion to Chriſtianity; yet either theſe Authorities are to be ſlighted, or be made receptive of any interpretation rather than the Commonwealth be diſarmed of its neceſſary ſupports, and all Laws made ineffectual and impertinent: For the intereſt of the republick, and the well being of bodies politick is not to depend upon the nicety of our imaginations, or the fancies of any peeviſh or miſtaken Priests, and there is no reaſon a Prince ſhould ask *John-a-Brunck*, whether his underſtanding will give him leave to reign, and be a King: Nay ſuppoſe there were divers places of Scripture, which did ſeemingly reſtrain the Political uſe of the Sword, yet ſince the avoiding a perſonal inconvenience, hath by all men been accounted ſuffi-

sufficient reason to expound Scripture to any sense rather than the literal, which infers an unreasonable inconvenience, (and therefore the *pulling out an eye, and the cutting of an hand,* is expounded by mortifying a vice, and killing a criminal habit) much rather must the Allegations against the power of the Sword endure any sense rather than it should be thought that Christianity should destroy that which is the only instrument of Justice, the restraint of vice and support of bodies politick. It is certain that Christ and his Apostles, and Christian Religion did comply with the most absolute Government, and the most imperial that was then in the world; and it could not have been at all indured in the world if it had not; for indeed the world it self could not last in regular and orderly communities of men, but be a perpetual confusion, if Princes and the Supreme Power in Bodies Politick, were not armed with a coercive power to punish Malefactors: The publick necessity, and universal experience of all the world convinces those men of being most unreasonable, that make such pretences which destroy all Laws, and all Communities, and the bands of civil Societies, and leave it arbitrary to every vain or vitious person, whether men shall be safe, or Laws be established, or a Murderer hang'd, or Princes Rule. So that in this case men are not so much to Dispute with particular Arguments, as to consider the Interest and concernment of Kingdoms and Publick Societies; For the Religion of Jesus Christ is the best establisher of the felicity of private persons, and of publick Communities: It is a Religion that is prudent and innocent, humane, and reasonable, and brought infinite advantages
to

to mankind, but no inconvenience, nothing that is unnatural, or unfociable, or unjuſt. And if it be certain that this world cannot be governed without Laws, and Laws without a compulſory ſignifie nothing, then its certain, that it is no good Religion that teaches Doctrines whoſe conſequents will deſtroy all Government; and therefore it is as much to be rooted out, as any thing that is the greateſt peſt and nuisance to the publick intereſt: And that we may gueſs at the purpoſes of the men, and the inconvenience of ſuch Doctrines: theſe men that did firſt intend by their Doctrines to diſarm all Princes, and bodies Politick, did themſelves take up arms to eſtabliſh their wild, and impious fancy; and indeed that Prince or Common-wealth that ſhould be perſuaded by them, would be expoſed to all the inſolencies of Forreigners, and all mutinies of the teachers themſelves, and the Governours of the people could not do that duty they owe to their people of proteſting them from the rapine and malice which will be in the world as long as the world is. And therefore, here they are to be reſtrained from preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they mean to preſerve their Government, and the neceſſity of the thing will juſtifie the lawfulness of the thing: If they think it to themſelves, that cannot be helped ſo long it is innocent as much as concerns the Publick; but if they preach it, they may be accounted Authors of all the conſequent inconveniences, and puniſht accordingly: *No Doctrine that deſtroys Government is to be endured;* For although thoſe Doctrines are not always good that ſerve the private ends of Princes, or the ſecret deſigns of State, which by reaſon of ſome accidents or imperfections of men may be promoted by that which is falſe and pretending,

ing, yet no Doctrin can be good that does not comply with the formality of Government it ſelf, and the well being of bodies Politick; *Au-* Cicero de
gur cum eſſet Cato, dicere auſus eſt, optimis au- ſenectute.
ſpiciis ea geri quæ pro Reipub. ſalute gererentur;
quæ contra Rempub. fierent contra auſpicia fieri:
Religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to do it diſadvantage, and therefore thoſe Doctrines that inconvenience the Publick, are no parts of good Religion; *ut Reſpub. ſalva ſit,* is a neceſſary conſideration in the permiſſion of Propheſyings: for according to the true, ſolid and prudent ends of the Republick, ſo is the Doctrin to be permitted or reſtrained, and the men that preach it according as they are good Subjects, and right Common-wealths men: For Religion is a thing ſuperinduced to temporal Government, and the Church is an addition of a capacity to a Common-wealth, and therefore is in no ſence to diſſerve the neceſſity and juſt intereſts of that to which it is ſuper-added for its advantage and conſervation.

And thus by a proportion to the Rules of *Numb. 2.* theſe inſtances, all their other Doctrines are to have their judgment, as concerning Toleration or reſtraint; for all are either ſpeculative, or practical, they are conſiſtent with the Publick ends or inſiſtent, they teach impiety or they are innocent, and they are to be permitted or rejected accordingly. For in the Queſtion of Toleration, the foundation of Faith, good life and Government is to be ſecured; in all others caſes, the former conſiderations are effectual.

S E C T. XX.

How far the Religion of the Church of Rome is Tolerable.

Numb. 1.

BUT now concerning the Religion of the Church of *Rome* (which was the other inſtance I promiſed to conſider) we will proceed another way, and not conſider the truth or falſity of the Doctrines; for that is not the beſt way to determine this Queſtion concerning permitting their Religion or Aſſemblies; becauſe that a thing is not true, is not Argument ſufficient to conclude that he that believes it true is not to be endured; but we are to conſider what inducements there are that poſſeſs the underſtanding of thoſe men, whether they be reaſonable and innocent, ſufficient to abuſe or perſuade wiſe and good men, or whether the Doctrines be commenc'd upon deſign, and manag'd with impiety, and then have effects not to be endured.

Numb. 2.

And here firſt, I conſider that thoſe Doctrines that have had long continuance and poſſeſſion in the Church, cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed in the preſent Profeſſors to be a deſign, ſince they have received it from ſo many Ages, and it is not likely that all Ages ſhould have the ſame purpoſes, or that the ſame Doctrine ſhould ſerve the ſeveral ends of divers Ages. But however, long preſcription is a prejudice, oftentimes ſo inſupportable, that it cannot with many Arguments be retrenched, as relying upon theſe grounds, that truth is more certain than falſhood, that God would not for ſo many Ages forſake his Church, and leave her in error; that whatſoever

is

is new, is not only ſuſpicious, but falſe; which are ſuppoſitions, pious and plausible enough. And if the Church of *Rome* had communicated Infants ſo long as ſhe hath prayed to Saints, or baptized Infants, the communicating would have been believed with as much confidence, as the other Articles are, and the diſſentients with as much impatience rejected. But this conſideration is to be enlarg'd upon all thoſe particulars, which as they are apt to abuſe the perſons of the men and amuſe their underſtandings, ſo they are instruments of their excuſe, and by making their errors to be invincible, and their opinions, though falſe, yet not criminal, make it alſo to be an effect of reaſon and charity, to permit the men a liberty of their Conſcience, and let them answer to God for themſelves and their own opinions: Such as are the beauty and ſplendor of their Church; their pompons Service; the ſtatelineſs and ſolemnity of the Hierarchy; their name of Catholick, which they ſuppoſe their own due, and to concern no other Sect of Chriſtians; the Antiquity of many of their Doctrines; the continual Succeſſion of their Biſhops; their immediate derivation from the Apoſtles; their Title to ſucceed *St. Peter*; the ſuppoſal and pretence of his perſonal Prerogatives; the advantages which the conjunction of the Imperial Seat with their Episcopall hath brought to that See; the flattering expreſſions of minor Biſhops, which by being old Records, have obtain'd credibility; the multitude and variety of people which are of their perſuaſion; apparent conſent with Antiquity in many Ceremonials which other Churches have rejected; and a pretended, and ſometimes an apparent conſent with ſome elder Ages in many matters doctrinal; the ad-

Z

vantage

vantage which is derived to them by entertaining ſome perſonal opinions of the Fathers, which they with infinite clamours ſee to be cryed up to be a Doctrin of the Church of that time; The great conſent of one part with another in that which moſt of them affirm to be *de fide*; the great differences which are commenc'd amongſt their Adverſaries, abuſing the Liberty of Propheſying unto a very great Licentiousneſs; their happineſs of being inſtruments in converting divers Nations; the advantages of Monarchical Government, the benefit of which as well as the inconveniences (which though they feel they conſider not) they daily do enjoy; the piety and the aſterity of their Religious Orders of men and women; the ſingle life of their Priests and Biſhops; the riches of their Church; the ſeverity of their Faſts and their exterior obſervances; the great reputation of their firſt Biſhops for Faith and Sanctity; the known holineſs of ſome of thoſe perſons whoſe Inſtitutes the Religious Perſons pretend to imitate; their Miracles falſe or true, ſubſtantial or imaginary; the casualties and accidents that have happened to their Adverſaries, which being chances of humanity are attributed to ſeveral cauſes according as the fancies of men and their Interests are pleaſed or ſatisfied; the temporal felicity of their Profeſſors; the oblique arts and indirect proceedings of ſome of thoſe who departed from them; and amongſt many other things, the names of Heretick and Schiſmatick, which they with infinite pertinacy faſten upon all that diſagree from them; Theſe things and divers others may very eaſily perſuade perſons of much reaſon and more piety, to retain that which they know to have been the Religion of their fore-

fore-Fathers, which had actual poſſeſſion and ſeizure of mens underſtandings before the oppoſite profeſſions had a name; and ſo much the rather becauſe Religion hath more advantages upon the fancy and affections, than it hath upon Philoſophy and ſevere diſcourſes, and therefore is the more eaſily perſuaded upon ſuch grounds as theſe, which are more apt to amuſe than to ſatiſfie the underſtanding.

Secondly, If we conſider the Doctrines themſelves, we ſhall find them to be ſuperſtructures ill built, and worſe manag'd, but yet they keep the foundation, they build upon God in Jeſus Chriſt, they profeſs the Apoſtles Creed, they retain Faith and Repentance as the ſupporters of all our hopes of Heaven, and believe many more truths than can be proved to be of ſimple and original neceſſity to ſalvation: And therefore all the wiſeſt Perſonages of the adverſe party allowed to them poſſibility of ſalvation, whiſt their errors are not faults of their will, but weakneſſes and deceptions of the underſtanding. So that there is nothing in the *foundation of Faith*, that can reaſonably hinder them to be permitted: The foundation of Faith ſtands ſecure enough for all their vain and unhandſome ſuperſtructures.

Numb. 3.

But then on the other ſide, if we take account of their Doctrines as they relate to good life, or are conſiſtent or inſiſtent with civil Government, we ſhall have other conſiderations.

Numb. 4.

Thirdly, For I conſider, that many of their Doctrines do accidentally teach or lead to ill life, and it will appear to any man that conſiders the reſult of theſe propoſitions: Attrition (which is a low and imperfect degree of ſorrow for ſin, or as others ſay a ſorrow for ſin com-

menc'd upon any reaſon of temporal hope, or fear or deſire or any thing elſe) is a ſufficient diſpoſition for a man in the Sacrament of penance to receive abſolution, and be juſtified before God, by taking away the guilt of all his ſins, and the obligation to eternal pains. So that already the fear of Hell is quite removed upon conditions ſo eaſie, that many men take more pains to get a groat, than by this Doctrin we are oblig'd to, for the curing and acquitting all the greateſt ſins of a whole life, of the moſt vitious perſon in the world: And but that they affright their people with a fear of Purgatory, or with the ſeverity of Penances in caſe they will not venter for Purgatory (for by their Doctrin they may chuſe or reſuſe either) there would be nothing in their Doctrin or Diſcipline to impede and ſlacken their proclivity to ſin; but then they have as eaſy a cure for that too, with a little more charge ſometimes, but moſt commonly with leſs trouble: For there are ſo many confraternities, ſo many privileged Churches, Altars, Monaſteries, Cœmeteries, Offices, Feſtivals, and ſo free a conceſſion of Indulgences appendant to all theſe, and a thouſand fine devices to take away the fear of Purgatory, to commute or expiate Penances, that in no ſect of men, do they with more eaſe and cheapneſs reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of Heaven, than in the Roman Communion.

Numb. 5. And indeed if men would conſider things upon their true grounds, the Church of *Rome* ſhould be more reprov'd upon Doctrines that infer ill life, than upon ſuch as are contrariant to Faith. For falſe ſuperſtructures do not always deſtroy Faith; but many of the Doctrines they teach if they were proſecuted to the utmoſt

iffue

issue would destroy good life : And therefore my quarrel with the Church of *Rome* is greater and stronger upon such points which are not usually consider'd, than it is upon the ordinary disputes, which have to no very great purpose so much disturb'd Christendom : And I am more scandaliz'd at her for teaching the sufficiency of Attrition in the Sacrament, for indulging Penances so frequently, for remitting all Discipline, for making so great a part of Religion to consist in externals and Ceremonials, for putting more force and Energy and exacting with more severity the commandments of men than the precepts of Justice, and internal Religion : Lastly besides many other things, for promising Heaven to persons after a wicked life upon their impertinent cries and Ceremonials transacted by the Priest and the dying Person : I confess I wish the zeal of Christendom were a little more active against these and the like Doctrines, and that men would write and live more earnestly against them than as yet they have done.

But then what influence this just zeal is to *Numb. 6.* have upon the persons of the Professors is another consideration : For as the Pharisees did preach well and lived ill, and therefore were to be heard not imitated : So if these men live well though they teach ill, they are to be imitated not heard : their Doctrines by all means, Christian and humane, are to be discountenanc'd, but their persons tolerated *catenus* ; their Profession and Decrees to be rejected and condemned, but the persons to be permitted, because by their good lives they confute their Doctrines, that is, they give evidence, that they think no evil to be consequent to such opinions, and if they did, that they live good lives, is argument

ſufficient that they would themſelves caſt the firſt ſtone againſt their own opinions, if they thought them guilty of ſuch miſdeemeanours.

Numb. 7.

Fourthly, But if we conſider their Doctrines in relation to Government, and Publick Societies of men, then if they prove faulty, they are ſo much the more intolerable by how much the conſequents are of greater danger and malice: Such Doctrines as theſe, The Pope may diſpenſe with all oaths taken to God or man: He may abſolve Subjects from their Allegiance to their natural Prince: Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks, Heretical Princes may be ſlain by their Subjects. Theſe Propoſitions are ſo depreſt, and do ſo immediately communicate with matter and the intereſts of men, that they are of the ſame conſideration with matters of fact, and are to be handled accordingly. To other Doctrines ill life may be conſequent; but the connexion of the antecedent and the conſequent is not (peradventure) perceiv'd or acknowledged by him that believes the opinion with no greater confidence than he diſavows the effect and iſſue of it. But in theſe, the ill effect is the direct profeſſion and purpoſe of the opinion, and therefore the man and the mans opinion is to be dealt withall, juſt as the matter of fact is to be judg'd; for it is an immediate, a perceiv'd, a direct event, and the very purpoſe of the opinion. Now theſe opinions are a direct overthrow to all humane ſociety, and mutual commerce, a deſtruction of Government, and of the laws and duty and ſubordination which we owe to Princes; and therefore thoſe men of the Church of *Rome* that do hold them, and preach them cannot pretend to the excuſes of innocent opinions, and hearty perſuaſion,

to

to the weakneſs of humanity and the difficulty of things ; for God hath not left thoſe truths which are neceſſary for conſervation of publick ſocieties of men, ſo intricate and obſcure, but that every one that is honeſt and deſirous to underſtand his duty, will certainly know that no Chriſtian truth deſtroys a mans being ſociable and a member of the body Politick, co-operating to the conſervation of the whole as well as of it ſelf. However if it might happen that men ſhould ſincerely err in ſuch plain matters of fact (for there are fools enough in the world) yet if he hold his peace, no man is to perſecute or puniſh him, for then it is meer opinion which comes not under Political Cogniſance, that is, that Cogniſance which only can puniſh corporally ; but if he preaches it, he is actually a Traytor, or Seditious, or Author of Perjury, or a deſtroyer of humane Society, reſpectively to the nature of the Doctrines ; and the preaching ſuch Doctrines cannot claim the privilege and immunity of a meer opinion, becauſe it is as much matter of fact, as any the actions of his diſciples and confidants, and therefore in ſuch caſes is not to be permitted, but judg'd according to the nature of the effect it hath or may have upon the actions of men.

Fifthly : But laſtly, In matters meerly ſpeculative, the caſe is wholly altered, becauſe the body Politick which only may lawfully uſe the ſword, is not a competent Judge of ſuch matters which have not direct influence upon the body Politick, or upon the lives and manners of men as they are parts of a Community (not but that Princes or Judges Temporal may have as much ability, as others, but by reaſon of the incompetency of the Authority ;) And

Act. 13. 4.

Gallio spoke wisely, when he discoursed thus to the Jews, *If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear you; But if it be a question of words and names, and of your Law, look ye to it; for I will be no Judge of such matters:* The man spoke excellent reason; for the Cognisance of these things did appertain to men of the other robe: but the Ecclesiastical power, which only is competent to take notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the Temporal sword or corporal inflictions: The meer doctrines and opinions of men are things Spiritual, and therefore not Cognoscible by a temporal Authority; and the Ecclesiastical Authority, which is to take Cognisance is it self so Spiritual, that it cannot inflict any punishment corporal.

2 Tim. 9.

And it is not enough to say that when the Magistrate restrains the preaching such opinions, if any man preaches them he may be punished (and then it is not for his opinion but his disobedience that he is punished) for the temporal power ought not to restrain Prophecying, where the publick peace and interest is not certainly concern'd. And therefore it is not sufficient to excuse him, whose Law in that case being by an incompetent power made a scruple where there was no sin.

Numb. 10.

And under this consideration, come very many Articles of the Church of *Rome*, which are wholly speculative, which do not derive upon practice, which begin in the understanding and rest there, and have no influence upon life and government, but very accidentally, and by a great many removes, and therefore are to be considered only so far as to guide men in their persuasions, but have no effect upon the persons

perſons of men, their bodies, or their temporal condition : I inſtance in two ; Prayer for the dead, and the Doctrin of Tranſubſtantiation, theſe two to be inſtead of all the reſt.

For the firſt, This Diſcourſe is to ſuppoſe it *Numb. 11* falſe, and we are to direct our proceedings accordingly : And therefore I ſhall not need to urge with how many fair words and gay pretences, this Doctrin is ſet off, apt either to cozen or inſtruct the conſcience of the wiſeſt according as it is true or falſe reſpectively. But we find (ſays the Romaniſt) in the Hiſtory of the *Maccabees*, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead (which alſo appears by other Teſtimonies, and by their form of prayers ſtill extant which they uſed in the Captivity) it is very conſiderable, that ſince our bleſſed Saviour did reprove all the evil Doctrines and Traditions of the Scribes and Pharifees, and did argue concerning the dead and the Reſurrection againſt the Sadduces, yet he ſpoke no word againſt this publick practice, but left it as he found it, which he who came to declare to us all the will of his Father would not have done if it had not been innocent, pious and full of charity. To which by way of conſociation, if we add that *St. Paul* did pray for *Onesiphorus*. *2 Tim. 1. 18.* That God would ſhow him a mercy in that day, that is, according to the ſtile of the New Teſtament, the day of Judgment : The reſult will be, that although it be probable, that *Onesiphorus* at that time was dead (becauſe in his ſalutations he ſalutes his houſhold, without naming him who was the *Major dome*, againſt his cuſtom of ſalutations in other places :) Yet beſides this, the prayer was for ſuch a bleſſing to him whoſe demonſtration and reception could

could not be but after death; which implies clearly, that then there is a need of mercy, and by conſequence the dead people even to the day of Judgment incluſively are the ſubject of a miſery, the object of Gods mercy, and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more glory in the re-union, but to pity them to ſuch purpoſes in which they need; which becauſe they are not revealed to us in particular, it hinders us not, in recommending the perſons in particular to Gods mercy, but ſhould rather excite our charity and devotion: For it being certain that they have a need of mercy, and it being uncertain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earneſt as not knowing the greatneſs of their neceſſity.

Numb. 12. And if there ſhould be any uncertainty in theſe Arguments, yet its having been the univerſal practice of the Church of God in all places, and in all Ages till within theſe hundred years, is a very great inducement for any member of the Church to believe that in the firſt Traditions of Chriſtianity, and the Inſtitutions Apoſtolical, there was nothing delivered againſt this practice, but very much to inſinuate or enjoyn it; becauſe the practice of it was at the firſt, and was univerſal. And if any man ſhall doubt of this, he ſhews nothing but that he is ignorant of the Records of the Church, it being plain in *Tertullian* and St. * *Cyprian* (who were the eldeſt Writers of the Latin Church) that in their times, it was *ab antiquo*, the cuſtom of the Church to pray for the Souls of the Faithful departed, in the dreadful myſteries:

De corona
milit. c. 3. &
de monogam. c. 10.
* Ep. 66.

ſteries: And it was an Inſtitution Apoſtolicall (ſays one of them) and ſo tranſmitted to the following Ages of the Church, and when once it began upon ſlight and diſcontent to be conteſted againſt by *Aerius*, the man was preſently condemn'd for a Heretick, as appears in *Epiphanius*.

But I am not to conſider the Arguments for the *Numb. 13.* Doctrin it ſelf, although the probability and fair pretence of them may help to excuſe ſuch perſons who upon theſe or the like grounds do heartily believe it. But I am to conſider that whether it be true or falſe, there is no manner of malice in it, and at the worſt, it is but a wrong error upon the right ſide of charity, and concluded againſt by its Adverſaries upon the confidence of ſuch Arguments, which poſſibly are not ſo probable as the grounds pretended for it.

And if the ſame judgment might be made of *Numb. 14.* any more of their Doctrines, I think it were better men were not furious, in the condemning ſuch Questions which either they underſtood not upon the grounds of their proper Arguments, or at leaſt conſider not, as ſubjected in the perſons, and leſſened by circumſtances, by the innocency of the event, or other prudential conſiderations.

But the other Article is harder to be judged *Numb. 15.* of, and hath made greater ſtirrs in Chriſtendom, and hath been daſht with more impetuous objections, and ſuch as do more trouble the Queſtion of Toleration. For if the Doctrin of Tranſubſtantiation be falſe (as upon much evidence we believe it is) then tis accuſed of introducing Idolatry, giving Divine worſhip to a Creature, adoring of bread and wine, and then

Deut. 13.

Numb. 16.

then comes in the precept of God to the Jews, that thoſe Prophets who perſuaded to Idolatry ſhould be ſlain.

But here we muſt deliberate, for it is concerning the lives of men, and yet a little deliberation may ſuffice; For Idolatry is a forſaking the true God, and giving Divine Worſhip to a Creature or to an Idol, that is, to an imaginary god, who hath no foundation in eſſence or exiſtence: And is that kind of ſuperſtition which by Divines is called the ſuperſtition of an undue object: Now it is evident that the Object of their Adoration (that which is repreſented to them in their minds, their thoughts, and purpoſes, and by which God principally if not ſolely takes eſtimate of humane actions) in the bleſſed Sacrament, is the only true and eternal God, hypſtatically joyned with his Holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually preſent under the veil of the Sacramental ſigns. And if they thought him not preſent, they are ſo far from worſhipping the bread in this caſe, that themſelves profeſs it to be Idolatry to do ſo, which is a demonſtration that their Soul hath nothing in it that is Idololatrical. If their confidence and fanciful opinion hath engag'd them upon ſo great miſtake (as without doubt it hath) yet the will hath nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to Idolatry, *Et nihil ardet in inferno niſi propria voluntas*: And although they have done violence to all Philoſophy, and the reaſon of man, and undone and cancelled the principles of two or three Sciences, to bring in this Article, yet they have a Divine Revelation whoſe literal and Grammatical ſenſe, if that ſenſe were intended, would warrant them to do violence to all the Sciences in

in the Circle; and indeed that, Transubstantiation is openly and violently against natural reason, is an Argument to make them disbelieve, who believe the mystery of the Trinity in all those niceties of explication which are in the School (and which now adays pass for the Doctrine of the Church) with as much violence to the principles of natural and supernatural Philosophy, as can be imagin'd to be in the point of Transubstantiation.

1. But for the Article it self, we all say that *Numb. 17.* Christ is there present some way or other extraordinary; and it will not be amiss to worship him at that time, when he gives himself to us in so mysterious a manner, and with so great advantages; especially since the whole Office is a Consecration of divers actions of Religion and Divine Worship. Now in all opinions of those men who think it an act of Religion to communicate and to offer; a Divine Worship is given to Christ, and is transmitted to him by mediation of that action and that Sacrament, and it is no more in the Church of *Rome*, but that they differ and mistake infinitely in the manner of his presence; which error is wholly seated in the Understanding, and does not communicate with the will; for all agree that the Divinity and the Humanity of the Son of God is the ultimate and adequate object of Divine Adoration, and that it is incommunicable to any creature whatsoever, and before they venture to pass an Act of Adoration, they believe the bread to be annihilated or turn'd into his substance who may lawfully be worshipped; and they who have these thoughts, are as much enemies of Idolatry, as they that understand better how to avoid that
incon-

inconvenience which is ſuppoſed to be the crime, which they formally hate, and we materially avoid : This conſideration was concerning the Doctrin it ſelf.

Numb. 18. 2. And now for any danger to mens perſons for ſuffering ſuch a Doctrin, this I ſhall ſay, that if they who do it, are not formally guilty of Idolatry, there is no danger that they whom they perſuade to it ſhould be guilty ; and what perſons ſoever believe it to be Idolatry, to worſhip the Sacrament, while that perſuaſion remains will never be brought to it, there is no fear of that : And he that perſuades them to do it by altering their perſuaſions and beliefs, does no hurt but altering the opinions of the men, and abuſing their underſtandings ; but when they believe it to be no Idolatry, then their ſo believing it is ſufficient ſecurity from that crime which hath ſo great a tincture and reſidency in the will, that from thence only it hath its being criminal.

Numb. 19. 3. However, if it were Idolatry, I think the Precept of God to the Jews of killing falſe and Idolatrous Prophets will be no warrant for Chriſtians ſo to do : For in the caſe of the Apoſtles and the men of *Samaria*, when *James* and *John* would have call'd for fire to deſtroy them even as *Elias* did under *Moses's* Law, Chriſt diſtinguiſhed the Spirit of *Elias* from his own Spirit, and taught them a leſſon of greater ſweetneſs, and conſign'd this truth to all Ages of the Church, that ſuch ſeverity is not conſiſtent with the meekneſs which Chriſt by his example and Sermons hath made a precept Evangelical : At moſt it was but a Judicial Law and no more of Argument to make it neceſſary to us, than the Moſaical precepts of putting Adul-

Adulterers to death, and trying the accused persons by the waters of jealousy.

And thus in these two Instances, I have given *Numb. 20.* account what is to be done in Toleration of diversity of opinions: The result of which is principally this: Let the Prince and the Secular Power have a care the Common-wealth be safe. For whether such or such a Sect of Christians be to be permitted is a question rather Political than Religious; for as for the concerns of Religion, these instances have furnished us with sufficient to determine us in our duties as to that particular, and by one of these all particulars may be judged.

And now it were a strange inhumanity to permit *Numb. 21.* Jews in a Common-wealth, whose interest is served by their inhabitation, and yet upon equal grounds of State and Policy, not to permit differing Sects of Christians: For although possibly there is more danger, mens persuasions should be altered in a commixture of divers Sects of Christians, yet there is not so much danger when they are changed from Christian to Christian, as if they be turn'd from Christian to Jew, as many are daily in *Spain* and *Portugal*.

And this is not to be excused by saying the *Numb. 22.* Church hath no power over them *qui foris sunt* as Jews are: For it is true the Church in the capacity of Spiritual regiments hath nothing to do with them, because they are not her Dioceses: Yet the Prince hath to do with them, when they are subjects of his regiment: They may not be Excommunicate any more than a stone may be kill'd, because they are not of the Christian Communion, but they are living persons, parts of the Common Wealth, infinitely deceived in their Religion, and very dangerous
if

if they offer to perſuade men to their opinions, and are the greateſt enemies of Chriſt whoſe honour and the intereſt of whoſe Service a Chriſtian Prince is bound with all his power to maintain. And when the Queſtion is of puniſhing diſagreeing perſons with death, the Church hath equally nothing to do with them both, for ſhe hath nothing to do with the temporal ſword, but the Prince whoſe Subjects equally Chriſtians and Jews are, hath equal power over their perſons; for a Chriſtian is no more a Subject than a Jew is; The Prince hath upon them both the ſame power of life and death, ſo that the Jew by being no Chriſtian is not *foris*, or any more an exempt perſon for his body, or his life than the Chriſtian is: And yet in all Churches where the ſecular power hath temporal reaſon to tolerate the Jews, they are tolerated without any ſcruple in Religion; which thing is of more conſideration, becauſe the Jews are direct Blaſphemers of the Son of God, and Blaſphemy by their own Law the Law of *Mofes* is made capital; And might with greater reaſon be inflicted upon them, who acknowledge its obligation then urg'd upon Chriſtians as an Authority, enabling Princes to put them to death, who are accused of accidental and conſequutive Blaſphemy and Idolatry reſpectively, which yet they hate and diſavow with much zeal and heartineſs of perſuaſion. And I cannot yet learn a reaſon why we ſhall not be more complying with them, who are of the houſhold of Faith; for at leaſt they are children though they be but rebellious children (and if they were not, what hath the Mother to do with them any more than with the Jews? they are in ſome relation or habitude of the Family,

Family, for they are conſigned with the ſame Baptiſm, profeſs the ſame Faith delivered by the Apoſtles, are erected in the ſame hope, and look for the ſame glory to be revealed to them; at the coming of their common Lord and Saviour, to whoſe Service according to their underſtanding they have vowed themſelves: And if the diſagreeing perſons be to be eſteemed as Heathens and Publicans, yet not worſe, *Have no company with them*, that's the worſt that is to be done to ſuch a man in St. Paul's judgment, *Yet count him not as an Enemy, but admoniſh him as a Brother.*

S E C T. XXI.

Of the duty of particular Churches in allowing Communion.

FROM theſe premiſes, we are eaſily inſtrumented concerning the lawfulness or duty reſpectively of Chriſtian Communion, which is differently to be conſidered in reſpect of particular Churches to each other, and of particular men to particular Churches: For as for particular Churches, they are bound to allow Communion to all thoſe that profeſs the ſame Faith upon which the Apoſtles did give Communion; For whatſoever preſerves us as Members of the Church, gives us title to the Communion of Saints, and whatſoever Faith or belief that is to which God hath promiſed Heaven, that Faith makes us Members of the Catholick Church: Since therefore the Judicial Acts of the Church are then moſt prudent and religious when they near-

A a eſt

est imitate the example and piety of God: To make the way to Heaven ſtraighter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with thoſe whom God will vouchſafe to be united, and to reſuſe our charity to thoſe who have the ſame Faith, becauſe they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing neceſſary which we overvalue; is impious and ſchiſmatical, it inferrs Tyranny on one part, and perſuades and tempts to uncharitableneſs and animoſities on both; It diſſolves Societies, and is an enemy to peace, it buſies men in impertinent wranglings, and by names of men and titles of factions it conſigns the intereſſed parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect thoſe advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of Chriſtian Religion and Societies.

Numb. 2.

And therefore *Vincentius Livinenſis*, and indeed the whole Church accounted the *Donatiſts* Hereticks upon this very ground, becauſe they did imperiouſly deny their Communion to all that were not of their perſuaſion; whereas the Authors of that opinion for which they firſt did ſeparate, and make a Sect, becauſe they did not break the Churches peace nor magiſterially preſcrib'd to others, were in that diſagreeing and error accounted Catholicks, *Diviſio enim & diſunio facit vos hereticos, pax & unitas faciunt Catholicos*, ſaid *St. Auſtin*; and to this ſenſe is that of *St. Paul*, *If I had all faith and not charity, I am nothing*: He who upon confidence of his true belief denies a charitable Communion to his brother, loſes the reward of both. And if Pope *Victor* had been as charitable to the *Aſiaticks* as Pope *Anicetus*, and *St. Polycarp* were to each other in the ſame diſagreeing concerning Eaſter,

Victor

Victor had not been *πληκτικώτερον καταπείμεν*,
 ſo bitterly reprov'd and condemn'd as he was
 for the uncharitable managing of his diſagreeing
 by *Polycrates* and *Ireneus*; *Concordia enim quæ eſt* Euseb. l. 5. c.
charitatis effectus eſt unio voluntatum non opinionum. 25, 26.
 True Faith which leads to charity leads on to
 that which unites wills and affections not opi- Aquinas, 22.
q 37 a 1.
 nions.

Upon theſe or the like conſiderations, the Numb. 3.
 Emperour *Zeno* publiſh'd his *ἐνωτικόν* in which he
 made the *Nicene Creed* to be the medium of Ca-
 tholick Communion, and although he liv'd after
 the Council of *Chalcedon*, yet he made not the
 Decrees of that Council an instrument of its
 restraint and limit, as preferring the peace of
 Chriſtendom, and the union of charity far be-
 fore a forced or pretended unity of perſuaſion,
 which never was or ever will be real and ſub-
 ſtantial; and although it were very convenient
 if it could be had, yet it is therefore not neces-
 ſary becauſe it is impoſſible; and if men pleaſe,
 what ever advantages to the publick would be
 conſequent to it, may be ſupply'd by a charita-
 ble compliance and mutual permiſſion of opini-
 on, and the offices of a brotherly affection pre-
 ſcrib'd us by the Laws of Chriſtianity: And we
 have ſeen it, that all Sects of Chriſtians, when
 they have an end to be ſerv'd upon a third,
 have permitted that liberty to a ſecond, which
 we now contend for, and which they formerly
 denied, but now grant, that by joyning hands,
 they might be ſtronger to deſtroy the third.
 The *Arrians* and *Meletians* joyned againſt the
 Catholicks: The Catholicks and *Novatians* joyn-
 ed againſt the *Arrians*. Now if men would do
 that for charity which they do for intereſt, it
 were handſomer and more ingenious; For that

they do permit each others diſagreeings for their own intereſt's ſake, convinces them of the lawfulness of the thing, or elſe the unlawneſs of their own proceedings, and therefore it were better they would ſerve the ends of charity than of faction, for then that good end would hallow the proceeding and make it both more prudent and moſt pious, while it ſerves the deſign of religious purpoſes.

S E C T. XXII.

That particular Men may communicate with Churches of different perſuaſions, and how far they may do it.

Numb. 1.

AS for the duty of particular men in the Queſtion of communicating with Churches of different perſuaſions, it is to be regulated according to the Laws of thoſe Churches; for if they require no impiety, or any thing unlawful as the condition of their Communion, then they communicate with them as they are Servants of Chriſt, as Diſciples of his Doctrine and Subjects to his Laws, and the particular diſtinguiſhing Doctrine of his Sect hath no influence or communication with him who from another Sect is willing to communicate with all the Servants of their Common Lord: For ſince no Church of one name is infallible, a wiſe Man may have either the miſfortune or a reaſon to believe of every one in particular, that ſhe errs in ſome Article or other, either he cannot communicate with any, or elſe he may communicate with all, that do not make

a ſin or the profeſſion of an errour to be the condition of their Communion. And therefore, as every particular Church is bound to Tolerate diſagreeing perſons in the ſenſes and for the reaſons above explicated; ſo every particular perſon is bound to Tolerate her, that is, not to reſuſe her Communion when he may have it upon innocent conditions: For what is it to me if the Greek Church denies Proceſſion of the third Perſon from the ſecond, ſo ſhe will give me the right hand of Fellowship, (though I affirm it) therefore becauſe I profeſs the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and retain all matters of Faith and neceſſity? But this thing will ſcarce be reduced to practice, for few Churches that have framed bodies of Confeſſion, and Articles will endure any perſon that is not of the ſame confeſſion; which is a plain demonſtration that ſuch bodies of Confeſſion and Articles do much hurt, by becomming instruments of ſeparating and dividing Communion, and making unneceſſary or uncertain propoſitions a certain means of Schiſm, and Diſunion: But then men would do well to conſider whether or no ſuch proceedings do not derive the guilt of Schiſm upon them who leaſt think it, and whether of the two is the Schiſmatick? he that makes unneceſſary and (ſuppoſing the ſtate of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that diſobeys them, becauſe he cannot without doing violence to his conſcience believe them? He that parts Communion, becauſe without ſin he could not entertain it, or they that have made it neceſſary for him to ſeparate, by requiring ſuch conditions which to man are ſimply neceſſary, and to his particular are either ſinful or impoſſible?

The

The Sum of all is this, There is no ſecurity in any thing or to any perſon, but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither ſin nor error does impede it from producing its proportionate and intended effect: becauſe it is a direct deletery to ſin and an excuſe to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmleſs. And indeed this is the intendment and deſign of Faith: For (that we may joyn both ends of this Diſcourſe together) therefore certain Articles are preſcribed to us and propounded to our underſtanding, that ſo we might be ſupplied with inſtructions, with motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Chriſt. So that obedience is juſt ſo conſequent to Faith, as the acts of will are to the dictates of the underſtanding: Faith therefore being in order to obedience, and ſo far excellent as it ſelf is a part of obedience or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it; it is evident that if obedience and a good life be ſecured upon the moſt reaſonable and proper grounds of Chriſtianity, that is, upon the Apoſtles Creed, then Faith alſo is ſecur'd. Since whatſoever is beſide the duties, the order of a good life, cannot be a part of Faith, becauſe upon Faith, a good life is built; all other Articles by not being neceſſary, are no otherwiſe to be requir'd, but as they are to be obtain'd and found out, that is morally, and fallibly, and humanely; It is fit all truths be promoted fairly and properly, and yet but few Articles preſcribed Magiſterially, nor framed into Symbols and bodies of Confession; leaſt of all after ſuch compoſures, ſhould men proceed
fo

so furiously as to say all disagreeing after such declarations to be damnable for the future, and capital for the present. But this very thing is reason enough to make men more limited in their prescriptions, because it is more charitable in such suppositions so to do.

But in the thing it self, because few kinds *Numb. 3.* of errors are damnable, it is reasonable as few should be capital. And because every thing that is damnable in it self and before Gods Judgment Seat, is not discernable before men (and questions disputable are of this condition) it is also very reasonable that fewer be capital than what are damnable, and that such Questions should be permitted to men to believe because they must be left to God to judge. It concerns all persons to see that they do their best to find out truth, and if they do, it is certain that let the error be never so damnable, they shall escape the error or the misery of being damn'd for it. And if God will not be angry at men for being invincibly deceiv'd, why should men be angry one at another? For he that is most displeased at another mans error, may also be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his understanding: For if he may fail in what he can chuse, he may also fail in what he cannot chuse: His understanding is no more secur'd than his will, nor his Faith more than his obedience. It is his own fault if he offends God in either but whatsoever is not to be avoided; as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the best and most inquisitive of men, are not offences against God, and therefore not to be punished, or restrained by men; but all such opinions in which the publick interests of the
Com-

Common-wealth, and the Foundation of Faith, and a good life, are not concerned, are to be permitted freely, *Quisque abundet in ſenſu ſuo* was the Doctrine of St. Paul, and that is Argument and Conclusion too; and they were excellent words which St. Ambroſe ſaid in attestation of this great truth, *Nec Imperiale eſt libertatem dicendi negare, nec ſacerdotale quod ſentias non dicere.*

Ἀλλὰ ἰχθυοῦ.



FINIS



